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THE PEN AND THE BOOK.

The Pen
and
The Book

BY
WALTER BESANT

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PREFACE.

THIS book is written for the instruction and the guidance of those young persons, of whom there are now many thousands, who are thinking of the Literary Life. It is written for no other persons, and may therefore be considered as, in a sense, privately printed. After the devotion of over thirty years to this life, I may, perhaps, be allowed to have acquired some experience. During this long period I have been a writer of leading articles, a reviewer, a writer of literary studies, a writer of history and biography, a novelist and a dramatist. I have read for a publisher : I have edited one archæological survey, and I am engaged in directing another : there are, therefore, very few branches of litera-

ture in which I have not been actively engaged. But, in addition to the experience thus acquired of writing in many branches, it has been my good fortune to acquire another and quite a different kind of experience. For four years I was Chairman of the Committee of the Society of Authors: and for seven years I have been editor of their organ, the *Author*. In these capacities I have had my attention necessarily turned to the commercial side of literature; I have been compelled to occupy myself with the study and the understanding of all those facts connected with publishing which have been commonly withheld from authors. In these pages I present to my reader, for his guidance, all the facts necessary to be known in connection with the production and the sale of a book.

To the thousands of young persons whom I address, the Literary Life offers attractions which are almost irresistible. The old bugbear —the prejudice formerly so well founded—of poverty has vanished. It is now well known that a respectable man of letters may command

an income and a position quite equal to those of the average lawyer or doctor. It is also well known that one who rises to the top may enjoy as much social consideration as a Bishop and as good an income. These points being now thoroughly well known and admitted by all, the number of those who would enter the ranks of literature increases every day.

It is my design in this book to present aspirants first with a general view of the Literary Life: next, with a chapter on the requirements of each branch; and thirdly, with the facts relating to the meaning and value of literary property. I have endeavoured to make my readers understand that this kind of work should be regarded as a career worthy of the highest honour and respect: that it should be taken in hand most seriously and earnestly, and with due regard to the responsibilities of the work. And I have endeavoured to make the young writer, at the outset, independent of the publishers by presenting him, as I said above, with the real meaning of a book as regards the

printer, the paper maker, the binder, and the bookseller. Armed with this knowledge, the writer will be enabled to understand what a proposed agreement means for himself and the publisher: it will go a long way to prevent his giving away his property or being "bested." In order to make the application of these figures the easier, tables have been drawn up which show the meaning of royalties to publisher and author respectively: and the principal modes of publishing will be found set forth, reviewed, and explained.

I have sought to render the book more complete by adding a chapter on Copyright, by Mr. G. H. Thring, Secretary of the Society of Authors; and another on Journalism, by a practical journalist attached to the staff of a London daily paper.

I have also added a chapter on the "Relations of Author and Bookseller," a subject which has never before been touched upon, although it is one of the highest importance. This short chapter I earnestly commend to my reader's careful attention.

This kind of knowledge the practical working of Literary Property — has been quite recently rendered more necessary than formerly by the issue of certain "draft agreements" by the Committee of the Publishers' Association. These agreements have been published in the *Author* (July, 1898), and are to be produced in separate form. I need not speak of them here except to lay down to the reader a most serious warning that the pretensions advanced by the publishers are such that they can only be characterized as grasping beyond all belief: and that if they were allowed, there would be an end, once for all, to the Profession of Literature, because that profession cannot continue to exist when the proceeds of a man's brain and work are all claimed and swooped up by the middleman. But these pretensions are not yet allowed.

I have only to add that I shall be obliged by any suggestions as to omission or commission in these pages.

WALTER BESANT.

UNITED UNIVERSITIES CLUB,
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INTRODUCTION.

I DESIRE in this Introductory chapter to present the Literary Life in outline to my readers. I cannot hope that what I have to say will be altogether new: but I do hope that I may be able to present some points of freshness: that I may be able to throw some light upon the conditions of modern literature, which may lead up to the chapters which follow.

First, then, what do we mean by the Literary Life?

Now, if you look at the census of 1891, you will find returned as authors, editors, and journalists in England and Wales the number of about 5800. As authors, editors, and journalists do often overlap and run into one another's field of work, we will not try to distinguish them. But you would carry away a very false impression of the numbers engaged in literary work if you think this number represents all, or even a half, of those who produce literature. There are clergymen, professors, lecturers, teachers of all kinds, lawyers, doctors, men in every branch of science, artists of all kinds, all of whom pro-

duce literary work. Literature is universal, and embraces everything: and the number of those who are literary men by profession is small indeed compared with the number of those who are literary men in fact. Take, for instance, the clergy. Consider how many of them are literary men—writers of books—books on theology, on scholarship, on archæology, on criticism, on history, in poetry, in fiction. Think what we should lose if such men as Dean Stanley, Chalmers, Stubbs, Lightfoot, Maurice, Kingsley, Martineau, had never written. And so in other professions. For one man who actually lives by literary work there are three or four to whom the production of literature is an occasional event, perhaps an occasional necessity. I think we should not be far wrong in placing the whole number of men and women engaged more or less in literary work at something like 20,000.

When, therefore, we speak of the Literary Life, it should include all those who produce literature. In common usage, however, we generally apply the term of Literary Life only to those who follow the profession of letters. And it is of them, and to them, especially that I wish to speak.

Then, again, what do we mean by literature? For my own part, I do not limit the word to the few precious gems, one or two in a generation, which are granted to a people. I include the

whole of current printed work—good and bad—the whole production of the day—whatever is offered. I am quite aware that most of it deservedly dies at once : but it is still part of current literature. The great works of the masters form our National literature : all the works of the present day taken together form the current literature.

It is a very common, and a very foolish, affectation to pretend that there is no profession of letters : and this in the face of the obvious and notorious fact that thousands of persons do actually live by that profession. Let us not be carried away by this nonsense. It may be that out of the thousands who now live by letters there are not twenty who will be remembered in a hundred years : that does not affect the question at all. It is enough for us to remember that there are these thousands who actually live by producing attempts at literature, and who do really lead, whether in its higher forms or not, the Literary Life.

Yet one more definition. In everything that is said, or that may be read, about the profession of literature and literary property, let us most carefully keep quite separate and distinct in our minds the literary value of a work and the commercial value of a work. There need not be any connection at all between the two. What I mean will be understood exactly if we ask what would have been the price paid by an edi-

tor to Burns for one of his immortal poems in his lifetime. Would he have given the poet a guinea? I doubt it. Does it make the least difference to that poem whether he got twopence or £100 for it? It is quite conceivable that a poem of the very highest value, one destined to sink into the very inmost heart of the people, and to abide with us as long as the language itself endures, may be published in a cheap magazine and bought for the merest trifle. Remember that Milton got £10 for his "Paradise Lost": Johnson, £10 for his "Satire of London": Oliver Goldsmith, £60 for his "Vicar of Wakefield." Some writers talk loosely about the worth of a book. Ask what kind of worth is meant: and when people speak very foolishly about the shameful neglect of one author, while another, far inferior, is run after, remember that the literary worth of the neglected author may be fully acknowledged by all whose judgment is worth having, but that the other man, for some reason or other, is the greater favourite, for the time, with the people. If a good book is not in demand, that fact does not make it a bad book. If a bad book is in demand, that fact does not make it a good book. Now, these considerations might seem elementary, were it not for the constantly recurring confusions as to this point. They are constantly recurring and constantly causing mischief. One cannot too earnestly impress this distinction upon our mind. Let us

keep separate the literary value of a work and its commercial value. The Literary value you understand without any definition: the commercial value of the book is just measured by the public demand for it—that and nothing more.

The first thing, then, that calls for attention in the Literary Life is its wonderful fascination. It attracts all classes. Editors receive every day poems, tales, sketches, essays—all kinds of things—from the most unlikely and the most unexpected places. They come from the mouth of the coal pit: from the factory: from the workshop; from the shop counter: from the palace. We all write: we all want to write. That matters little so long as people are contented to remain at their own work and to make of their writing an amusement and a recreation. Unfortunately, too many are so carried away with the charm of the work that they desire to live altogether by their pens: they want, above all things, to shake off any other kind of business and to be nothing but writers. Again, unfortunately, the desire alone, however strong, cannot bring with it the power and the natural aptitude.

If we ask why the Literary Life possesses so many attractions, we shall find many reasons. For instance, those who are attracted by it are very often great readers, devourers of books: they want to live among books: to read them all day long: they think that in the life they

desire they will be able to do so. Then, again, it is a quiet life : it is certainly free from the worries and anxieties of business. And there seems—in some cases there is—less servitude in it : one can work at any hour he pleases, and as long as he pleases. Again, there is in it a certain absence of money making and money seeking : the artist is wholly absorbed in his work : while it lasts he can have no thought of money—you cannot imagine a poet over his work asking himself how much he has earned that morning. These are the most obvious reasons for this singular fascination. There are other reasons, not quite so obvious : such as the joys and pains of composition ; the sense of battle in grappling with language and compelling it to express exactly what is desired—that and nothing more. This is, I believe, a very potent force in determining the candidate for literary honours. And we must not forget the consideration that the life of letters—if it is successful—does really in the long run confer more dignity and respect upon a man than any other line of work, unless it be the Church. Which of the two, for instance, does the world love most—Marlborough or Addison? Which of the two, Scott or Wellington? One cannot choose but to consider, that a young man, in entering upon a life of letters, desires a prize of which the best part is the love and respect of the world. Of course we think here only of the leading men : we

understand the love with which Burns, Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, Tennyson, Charles Lamb, and others are regarded by the world. Surely we must acknowledge that it is a very beautiful thing, and it should be an ennobling thing, for a young man to nourish the ambition of winning the love of the world. It should make him careful of his conduct: it should make him feel that in the future, when he is famous, a fierce white light will be turned upon every discoverable day of his life: that every unworthy act will be raked up, and every moment of weakness will be recorded against him. It should make him remember, too, that our love for these great writers is not really based upon the facts of their lives, in spite of our curiosity into those facts, but upon their writings, and that the world feels—it is the instinctive feeling—I am sure that it is a true feeling—that every man who can write at all—write, that is, so as to move the world—reveals in his work himself—his own heart—his own personality. The poet—the novelist—the preacher who makes us love him wins our love by the figure, more or less shadowy, that every one constructs of him out of his writings. One might go even farther, and lay it down as a rule that the writers who cannot command our love cannot achieve their survival even beyond their own generation.

These, then, are some of the reasons for the undoubted fascination of the life of letters. The

love of books: the desire of a quiet life: the imaginary freedom from the ordinary cares: the joy of composition: the desire to achieve the love and respect of the world: their own respect and love for great authors—these are the chief among the many determining forces which may make a young man or a young woman ardently desire to embrace the profession of letters.

These are the attractions. History, however, points a warning finger. "Pause!" she says. "Read in my page—that page which tells of the calamities and the sorrows of authors. You dream of the ideal life—the successful life: there is another side—that of the unsuccessful. Consider this side, too." It is, as we all know, a dreadful page—a terrible page. There is life-long penury in it: starvation: suicide: a debtor's prison: hard and grinding work for miserable pay: a cruel task-master: work done to order paid for by the yard. As for the wished-for life among books, these unfortunate poets could not afford to buy books: as for freedom, quiet, ease, they never had any at all. Even the joy of composition, which one would think could not be taken from them, they could never enjoy, because they wrote to order and what they were told to write: they were paid servants: they lived in a garret: they never rose out of poverty and misery: they were buried in the paupers' corner. In this doleful page of history the candidates for literary glory could read how Eustace

Budgell leaped into the river and so ended his miserable days: how Henry Carey, even while his song of "Sally in our Alley" was sung in every other house, killed himself to escape starvation: how Chatterton poisoned himself: how William Pattison died at twenty-one of a broken heart: how Richard Savage ended his days in a debtor's prison: how Oliver Goldsmith half starved in a garret: how Collins went mad: and how the rest of the fraternity—all beginning with the hope of fame and honour, and the income which belongs to fame and honour—were ragged mendicants, drinking where they could, begging for one more guinea, crowding at the booksellers' shops, handing round the hat for subscriptions to their new volume of poems, or for assistance to keep them out of the Fleet Prison. Warnings there were in plenty: warnings there are still: it is true that these names belong to the last century, but it is also certain that there are at the present moment wrecks in plenty to warn the new comer of the perils in his way. One has only to look around in order to find out these wrecks: to discern the men who put out from port, years ago, with flowing sails and flying flags, and now return with the battered hulk which hardly keeps afloat: men who made a bid for success and have failed: who now live sordid lives, doing the lowest drudgery of literary work for the pay that is tossed to a drudge: men who have

achieved no kind of fame or name, and now have to endure the bitterness of watching the men who they fondly believe are no better than themselves, borne upward amid the plaudits of the multitude.

There is another warning in addition to the voice of History. This warning is the universal opinion as to literature considered as a calling. You all know what that was. Every bookish boy who would enter the ranks of literature was warned that it was a beggarly profession—a starving profession. For there was this curious paradox as regards literature. We respected and loved the writer who could make us love him—we despised the profession by which he lived. It is as if we should respect the general and despise the army : or as if we should respect the judge and despise the law. There, however, was the universal opinion. Literature, we were agreed, is a beggarly profession.

How did that opinion grow up? How did we come to believe it? Well : I think it may be traced back to the last century, and to the starving poets of that time. Come back with me for a moment to the middle of the eighteenth century. Life was then far more open and visible to all than it is at present. Every profession by its uniform proclaimed itself : the clergyman wore his cassock and his gown in the street—that was his uniform : the king's officers had no other dress but their uniform : the physician wore his great wig and black velvet

coat, and carried his gold-headed stick with the pomander box — that was his uniform: the lawyer wore his wig and gown, also, in the street and in the coffee-house—it was his uniform: the nobleman if he walked had his gold star blazing on his chest; if he rode, his runners in white cloth ran before his carriage to clear the way—all this was his uniform: the merchant in black velvet or in brown silk showed the richly laced ruffles at his wrists, and the rich lace at his throat, with gold buckles and a gold laced hat—it was his uniform: the respectable tradesman walked abroad in white silk stockings with silver buckles and good broad cloth—it was his uniform: the servants wore liveries: the mechanics, the shopmen, the apprentices all wore aprons: the sailor wore his petticoats. Everybody, in short, proclaimed in some way or other by his appearance the nature of his calling: and everybody enjoyed in this way such dignity and respect as belonged to his calling. How did the poet appear? He was to be seen every day and all day long: he haunted the coffee-houses, the eating-houses, and the taverns of Fleet Street and its neighbourhood. Alone among men he had no uniform. Yet he could be recognised by his rags. Everybody knew the company of wits in the tavern: they were notoriously, horribly poor: notoriously they had neither principles, nor honour, nor dignity: for a guinea, it was said,

they would write satires, epigrams, anything for or against either side or anybody. Since the people only saw the ragged side, they supposed that the whole army was in rags: it seemed to them the only profession whose normal or customary condition was one of rags. The world saw, further, very plainly, that they had no independence, but that they were the servants—miserably paid—and the hacks of the booksellers. They were to be seen by anyone humbly and openly craving for the advance of a guinea: they were to be seen going round humbly soliciting subscribers' names for a new volume of poems. Now, the City of London has never at any time greatly cared for poetry, but it has always despised, without any pretence, openly, heartily, and profoundly despised, poverty: and the City judged the poet by his outward appearance—by his manner of life. Now, his outward appearance, as I have indicated, was too often ragged: and his manner was too often servile.

Another thing there was which largely helped to create and to advance this contempt. It was this. Every other profession holds itself in honour. You never find a lawyer ridiculing other lawyers because they are unsuccessful. You never find an artist ridiculing another because nobody will buy his pictures. Yet the literary man has been constantly engaged in writing enviously and savagely against his brethren.

This, I think, is the very worse feature of all : it must be owned that the second-rate unsuccessful literary man of the last century was totally devoid of generosity or of any greatness of mind at all. Envy and jealousy consumed him : towards his brethren he was simply malignant. The mere fact that another man was also an author, was sufficient to fill his soul with hatred against that man. Do you know the lines of Churchill -written about the time of which we are speaking ?

> Look thro' the world, in every other trade,
> The same employment's cause of kindness made :
> At least appearance of good will creates,
> And every fool puffs off the fool he hates.
> Cobblers with cobblers smoke away the night,
> And in the common cause e'en play'rs unite ;
> Authors alone, with more than common rage,
> Unnatural war with brother authors wage.

Remember, however, that it was not generally the great writers who showed this kind of malignity. Johnson, for instance, was always magnanimous. As for Pope, it must be confessed that he led off in the long, cruel, and degrading attacks of poet on poet, of author on author. What can be more venomous, what can be more malignant, than the Dunciad ? Smollett himself, who had felt the bitterness of poverty and contempt, goes out of his way to exhibit the weaknesses and the follies of his brethren. Even Goldsmith — the genial, convivial Goldsmith, who himself had been one of the ragamuffin

company—who loved to exchange the exalted society of the Literary Club for the tavern, where the starveling wits assembled—even Goldsmith must have his fling at the beggar poet.

> There in a lonely room, from bailiffs snug,
> The Muse found Scroggen stretched beneath a rug :
> A window, patched with paper, lent a ray,
> That dimly showed the state in which he lay.
>
> * * * * * *
>
> The room was cold : he views with keen desire
> The rusty grate unconscious of a fire ;
> With beer and milk arrears the frieze was scored,
> And five cracked teacups dress'd the chimney board :
> A nightcap deck'd his brow, instead of bay,
> A cap by night—a stocking all the day.

And there was yet one more unfortunate circumstance which helped to keep literature in contempt : its total neglect by the court of the eighteenth century. Many of the aristocracy were noble patrons of literature : never, the court : the pension given to Dr. Johnson is, I believe, the single solitary instance of the kind in the reign of George the Third. Let us understand this point, which, to my mind, is very important. No acceptance of title or rank can affect the literary position of a writer in the least degree. As a poet, Tennyson remained plain Tennyson after he became a peer. But the distinction taught the people, as nothing else could teach them, that the highest honour a nation can bestow upon a great poet should be given to him in order to mark the honour and

respect and affection that the nation entertains towards him : and—which is another thing still —the people were taught by this simple example that literature is a thing which is to be held in the highest honour, and a thing to be recognised in the highest manner possible. What do you suppose would be the natural result upon the minds of people not given to reflection so much as to observation if none of the national distinctions were bestowed upon the navy ? Should we not expect to find the navy falling rapidly into disrepute ? This is exactly what has happened with literature. The nation might respect, of its own free will, the individual poet, but it has been taught, officially and designedly, that the calling of the poet is contemptible.

Another circumstance which has greatly injured the calling of letters, is the feeling that literature ought not to be even remotely connected with money : that a poet should present his verse to the world, but it is beneath the dignity of an author to speak of money. How did this false and foolish prejudice arise ? There has never been any poet or any author who has in reality been unwilling to take all the money his works would bring in. What was not beneath the dignity of Dryden, Pope, Johnson, Goldsmith, Byron, Thackeray, Dickens, need not surely be beneath the dignity of ourselves. But the author must not write for money. Well, he always has written for money and he

always will. Let me, however, once more beg you to keep quite separate in your minds the commercial and the literary worth of a book. And let me remind you that a poet or an author of any kind cannot write at all—cannot at least write anything worth having, if he is not entirely absorbed in his work, and careless while he is engaged upon it, as to any other consideration at all. Once the work done, he has created a literary property of greater or less value. He is free to deal with it then as he thinks best. Why should he not? No one objects to the painter getting what price he can for his picture: no one talks with contempt of the painter working for money. No one objects to the lawyer taking money: or the physician: or any other conceivable intellectual or artistic workman. Why then must it be thrown in the teeth of the writer that he writes for money? To this point I shall return later on. I only note it here, because this prejudice has worked such mischief to those who lead the life of letters. It has now become a foolish common-place lingering still among those literary men whose work cannot be considered a property. They would fain console themselves with the reflection that it is beneath the dignity of poets to expect money.

Remembering these things, therefore, we may understand how the popular idea of literature arose: it was a beggarly profession: there was

no money in it: there was no dignity in it: and it was not respectable. These considerations are sufficient to show us, I think, how that popular estimate of the profession arose, and how it sank deep into the heart of the people. They saw the miseries: they did not see the glories. Rags and poverty are easily discernible: the quiet dignity of Johnson: of Gray: of Cowper: of Fielding: they could neither see, nor could they understand.

Therefore, I say, it was a beggarly profession, and so it continues to this day, with some modifications, in the mind of the people.

What naturally followed? This, as we might have expected. The contempt of the people for the starving poets and for the wretched profession of literature extended to literature itself. During the last century, in spite of frequent and destructive wars, the trade and wealth of this country advanced by leaps and bounds. At the close of the century its trade and wealth had reached a point never before approached. But there can be no doubt that the general or average culture of the citizens had decreased rather than advanced. Everything tends to prove that the aldermen and rich merchants of London —a hundred years ago—were as ignorant of English literature as they were of the interior of Australia: they had no knowledge at all of English letters: their wives had none: their daughters had none. They possessed a few

books, which were never increased in number. For literature and the producers of literature they entertained the most profound contempt. In their contempt they were backed by the court, which was hopelessly indifferent to letters: by the aristocracy and county gentry, who were what Matthew Arnold calls "barbarians:" that is to say, they had their sport, their races, their gambling, their drinking, and the other virtues and vices which made up their lives; but there was no part in their lives for a book, or the author of a book. I declare, without fear of contradiction, that the vast majority of the English people, including practically the whole of the City of London, maintained at that time—one hundred years ago—a deep and honest contempt for literature.

This was a most unfortunate thing for the national character. The people, who should be continually instructed that fine literature is the greatest achievement of a nation next to its good laws and good government, were carefully taught by the contempt of Court, nobility, and the wealthier class, that literature was not a thing to be considered at all: it was the plaything of a few: the pretence at work made by men too lazy to do anything else. I do believe that had things been different in this respect—had our people enlarged their mental as they enlarged their material bounds—most of the miseries and the disasters and the stupidities

of the last hundred years would have been avoided. It is the function of literature to be always dispersing clouds that are always gathering: and it is a most certain law of humanity that it will infallibly sink lower if it is not continually lifted higher. We require the same lessons in every generation: we require the same lessons in right and wrong: in justice and in equity: in right thinking and in right doing: and it is the noblest function of the author, whether as preacher, teacher, poet, historian, novelist, dramatist, essayist, to keep us from thinking wrongly. A hundred years ago, if there were prophets in the land, their voice was local: the mass of the people looked for no prophet: they despised the prophetic calling. I think we can discern the evil effects of this contempt in every act of the time: especially in the stupidity which prompted the prosecutions of the early Radicals: in the treatment of social and trade questions: in the treatment of the poor: in the treatment of the criminal. Can we suppose for one moment that if Carlyle had been preaching in 1790: if among that deaf and prejudiced mass his voice could have gained a hearing: can we, I say, suppose that the stupidities which followed would have been possible? If at this day we are somewhat awakened to better things—if our minds are enlarged—if there is a readier and a wider sense of justice among us—it is because prophets have spoken.

and because we have ceased to despise the voice of prophecy.

Let us turn, next, to consider the present conditions of the literary life. To begin with, the old contempt for the calling has been somewhat modified. It is understood nearly everywhere that the life of the author may be respectable, may be honourable, may be even—though this is not so generally known—lucrative. The profession of letters has been added to the other professions. Formerly, as you know, the noble, or learned, professions included Theology, Medicine, and Law. To these are now added Science, Art, Architecture, Engineering, Music, and Literature. And the new professions ought to be held in as much respect as the old. Now, for a profession to be classed among the noble callings and to be held in universal respect, three main points must be acquired: three conditions gained. First of all, it must be independent: *i.e.*, the members must not be servants of anyone: the barrister takes his work from the solicitor, but he is not the servant of the solicitor: next, it must be entitled to share in the national distinctions as much as a soldier, a sailor, or a statesman: and, thirdly, it must have in its gift great prizes, whether of distinction, or of money, or both. For the first time in history the profession of letters is beginning to possess these three qualifications for respect. There has been in existence for the last twelve years a society,

very small and humble at first, but grown now into an association of fifteen hundred members, whose simple object has been the investigation of literary property, and its defence in the interest of authors. The result has been a movement which means a complete revolution in the methods of literature, which will make authors, for the first time in history, the masters and administrators of their own property. So that the first requisite of a great profession is at last beginning to be achieved : literature is growing independent. As to the national distinctions, there seems every reason to believe that they will in course of time be thrown open to the man of letters as well as to the soldier and the lawyer. Tennyson received a peerage : so did Bulwer Lytton : Dickens was offered a baronetcy, but refused, in which he was wrong, if only for the reason, already alleged, of the lesson it would have afforded to the people. Carlyle was offered a G.C.B., with a pension. His refusal also was, from my point of view, a great mistake. He should have taken it, not because it would have given him any additional distinction, but because it would have made the people understand clearly that literature such as Carlyle produced was deserving of the very highest distinctions in the gift of the Sovereign.

There remains the third condition—that of great prizes. I propose, in another place, to dwell upon the commercial side of literature. I

have already most earnestly desired you to keep that side quite separate in your own minds. I will only therefore add that the value of the commercial side has made enormous strides during the past five or six years, owing mainly to the action of one Society, and the light which it has thrown upon the meaning of literary property. Formerly—say sixty years ago—there were three or four only, popular writers, who made respectable incomes by their books : there are now writers by the score in every branch of literature, who draw from their work substantial prizes, and can live, to use the common phrase, "like gentlemen."

The calling of letters, then, now belongs to the nobler professions. This is a great point gained. It may be objected that there were always great prizes in honour, if not in money, to be won. That is true : but a hundred years ago the great prizes were few : and there was nothing outside the great prizes : you either greatly succeeded or you wholly failed. There was no gentle gradation : no incline : no connecting ladder between failure and success, as in other professions. For instance, in the law the greatest and most splended prize is the woolsack: but next to the woolsack are the judges, and next to the judges other great officers of the law, and next to these come the Queen's Counsel, and then the barristers of smaller practice. So that the whole profession is like a regular

pyramid of easy incline with the woolsack on the top. In literature, until recently, there was no such incline. That incline, however, is now furnished—and by journalism. The beginner in the life of letters now attempts to scale the fort by means of journalism. This gives him the means of livelihood: sometimes much more than the mere livelihood: very often it claims his whole life, and gives him the successful career which he hoped at first to make in other ways. It is, indeed, impossible to over-estimate the assistance which journalism has rendered to the profession of letters.

We all know the history of Chatterton: what would be the history of a Chatterton of the present day? I will tell it, taking a living example, from my own knowledge. As a boy he was bookish: he devoured all the books he could lay hands upon: he borrowed and read: at school he was easily first: at home he locked himself up and secretly wrote poetry: already he had joined the fraternity of those who write. When he left school, at which he had learned shorthand, he was placed in a newspaper office. Here he reported meetings and lectures and police cases: he picked up news: he shaped the paragraph: he made himself generally useful: presently he began to write descriptive papers: he reviewed books: all this time he was giving his leisure hours—which were not too many—to the cultivation of literature. And at last he brought

out his first work—a volume of poems perhaps: or a volume of fiction or a volume of essays—with the help of which he introduced himself. His name now began to appear in magazines, and more and more frequently—yet he remained on his newspaper: he was not in the least danger of starving: he was, on the contrary, well fed and fairly prosperous. But he drifted more and more into authorship. He has now become well known as a writer. If he is wise he will continue to write for the papers as well as the magazines. Perhaps at last the day will come when he will be fully justified in trusting to himself, and can give up the newspaper work. But he will never quite give up his connection with journalism. Very likely he will be appointed editor of some magazine: he may be invited to advise on some great publishing firm: he may be appointed literary editor of a great morning paper. That would be the modern career of a new Chatterton.

Let us consider next what is the kind of life led daily by the modern man of letters—not a great genius, not a popular author: but a good steady man of letters of the kind which formerly had to inhabit the garrets of Grub Street. This man, of whom there are many—or this woman, for many women now belong to the profession—goes into his study every morning as regularly as a barrister goes to chambers: he finds on his desk two or three books waiting for review: a

MS. sent him for an opinion : a book of his own to go on with—possibly a life of some dead and gone worthy for a series : an article which he has promised for a magazine : a paper for the Dictionary of National Biography : perhaps an unfinished novel to which he must give three hours of absorbed attention. This goes on, day after day, all the year round. There is never any fear of the work failing as soon as the writer has made himself known as a trustworthy and an attentive workman. The literary man has his club : he makes an income by his labour which enables him to live in comfort, and to educate his children properly. Now, this man a hundred years ago would have been—what you have seen —an object of contempt for his poverty and helplessness : the cause of contempt for Literature itself.

Let me warn young people against giving up their line of life—humble perhaps, but safe —in order to attempt the literary life, for which they do not possess the necessary qualifications. What those qualifications are we will presently inquire. Without them the writer must be content to take the lowest place : to do the humblest jobs : to count himself happy if he can find a post as compiler of indexes or corrector of proofs : to a life of dependence which in itself need not be a bad thing ; and of humiliation and of failure. The old miseries are mostly gone, but there are many bitter disillusions in the present day : and

I think that for the young writer, just in proportion to the glow and glory of his hopes, so is the agony and shame of disappointments and failure. If the way through the Gate of Honour seems open : if the heart of the aspirant beats quick and fast at beholding it afar off, think how his heart will fall when he finds that after all it is the Gate of Humility, not the Gate of Honour that is open to him.

I have shown the average life of the average man of letters—a quiet, industrious, rather obscure life. Let us consider what it means to be a successful man of letters. I have on several occasions spoken of this from the special knowledge which I have been enabled to obtain. I find that I am generally charged with exaggeration : you will see immediately of what kind. It is, I know, the defect of the novelist that he is prone to exaggeration. I will do my very best not to exaggerate, and with this laudable object I have submitted my figures to a friend who never wrote a novel : never overstated a case : and never made up a story in his life. He knows the condition of things as well as I do myself, and has had the same opportunities of learning them. His remark to me was this : "You are perfectly justified in the figures that you give, and in the inferences which you draw."

The figures are concerned, first of all, with the population of the country, and next with the education of the country.

Come back with me once more to the year 1750. The population of the three kingdoms was then ten millions. Of these by far the greater part were engaged in agricultural labour. Speaking generally, none of the working classes could read at all. This removes eight millions out of the ten. There remain two millions to represent the class which could read. But how many of these inquired for the new books? None of the country gentry: very few indeed of the reading class: allowing for literary sets and circles, for scholars and students at the universities, for lawyers, and for the clergy, I cannot possibly allow more than 30,000 as possible readers or inquirers after new books. Only thirty thousand! The new books of the day were issued to this very small and very critical audience of thirty thousand!

Pass over eighty years: let us ask what were the conditions of the book market in 1830. The population was now twenty-four millions: but the thirst for literature had not increased in like proportion, save that women had now begun to read. Making all deductions, I estimate that there were in this country not more than 50,000 persons interested in new books. Remember, that there was in 1830 hardly any communication with America: that Australia and New Zealand did not exist: that there was no book trade with India: and that the other colonies had not as yet developed any intellectual side to speak of.

That was sixty-five years ago. The writers of the day could not hope for an audience of more than 50,000 : not that so many would, or could, buy them, but there were so many readers at the outside.

Now, if you please, we will turn to the present day.

We saw that, both in 1750 and in 1830, the market of English books was bounded by the seas that encircle these islands. We also saw that, in 1750, the number of persons interested in literature was about 30,000, and in 1830 it was about 50,000. What is the area now open to that market ? Well : we have, first, the British Isles, where there are now forty millions of people : next, the colonies—Canada, Australia, South Africa, India, New Zealand, the settlements of the Far West, the West India Islands. In Canada there are six millions, at least one quarter of them persons of some cultivation and much reading. In India there are, besides the English merchants and planters, and the Government servants and the army, a large number of educated natives who read English books—say, one million altogether. In Australia there are four-and-a-half millions : in New Zealand one million : in South Africa, which is growing rapidly, there are about two millions : in the smaller islands and colonies there are probably altogether another two millions more, though more than three-fourths are

negroes, Indian coolies or Chinamen. This represents a possible—I say, possible, not actual—reading area of fifty-six millions. But the American International Copyright Act opens to us the whole of their market as well. In a word, there is waiting at this moment for the author who achieves the task of catching the universal ear, a possible audience of one-hundred-and-twenty millions of people, who can all, at least, read! Think! One-hundred-and-twenty millions of possible readers at the present day, against 50,000 in the year 1830 — only sixty years ago! Such an audience the world has never before witnessed: and it is growing, growing every day: it grows by the natural increase of population: it grows far faster by the spread of education and by the rapid development of new countries. Take the development of new countries—sixty years ago there was no Chicago at all: now there is a city with two million inhabitants, of whom one half are decently educated and read books, and quite one hundred thousand are interested in new literature. Sixty years ago there was practically no Australia: now there are all these people, of whom more than half are decently educated and read books. Again, every year the schools throw upon the world children by the hundred thousand, all taught to read, and trained to desire reading. Sixty years ago there were no free libraries. Now there are in America, and

this country and the colonies, about 6000—great and small. Sixty years ago there was a tax of 4d. on every newspaper—think of that! There was a tax of 3s. 6d. on every advertisement; and there was a tax of 3d. a lb. on the paper—how could the people be got at with such bars to knowledge? In one word, reading, which has always been the amusement of the cultivated class, has now become the principal amusement of every class: all along the line from peer to chimney sweep we are reading. Some of us are said to be reading rubbish. That may be: but it is certainly less mischievous to be reading rubbish than to be drinking at bars or playing with street rowdies. The great point for us, at the present moment, to observe is that the whole civilised world has acquired a taste for reading: and that it has become for all classes the universal and the favourite amusement.

We have set down a popular writer's possible audience, at the present day, at the enormous total of 120 millions. We know, however, that no single writer could ever command an audience of the whole. What, then, is the real audience of a very popular writer? It may fairly be assumed that out of the 120 millions of possible readers there are certain authors—as Scott, Marryat, Dickens—who are read by at least the tenth part. The mere thought of such an audience takes away the breath. A tenth part: that is, nearly twelve millions of living people—

not to count the millions of dead people—have read these writers! Truly, there has never before in the history of the world been so great an audience for a poet or story teller; formerly the poet consoled himself, remembering his very narrow audience, with the thought that he would not die, but live: he looked forward through a telescope, and saw in imagination the generations in endless succession hanging on his words: the popular and successful writer of the day may look round him with a telescope and see—as far as any telescope can reach—a boundless ocean of faces, eager faces, listening faces, faces played upon by emotions awakened by his own words. That is the main difference between the man of letters of 1750—or him of 1830—and the man of letters of the present day. So great—of such importance—is the enormous revolution that has been brought about during the last fifty years: that while an English writer formerly addressed a little body of educated people among a vast mass of illiterates, he now has the chance of addressing half the civilised world at once. Well, but—you will say again—a man who appeals to everybody who speaks his language is indeed rare: how many can an ordinary writer address? Well, let us take a novelist of respectable—if not of the highest—rank. His work comes out first, say, in the *Illustrated London News:* at the same time, in an American illustrated paper and in an Australian illus-

trated paper. This mean a circulation, to begin with, of something like 250,000 copies a week. How many readers will you give to each number? Remember that every copy of the *Illustrated* that goes into a house is read by all that household, and is lent to other houses: or it lies on the public library table: or it goes to a club: or it goes to a hotel or a tavern. I think we may very fairly, and without exaggeration, reckon at least twenty readers for every number: that gives us 5,000,000 readers. The work is then published as a volume; copies are bought and placed on the shelves: they are read and lent: they go to the libraries, where they are read till they drop to pieces, when they are replaced. Reckoning all these different appearances, we may calculate—moderately—that a fairly popular novel will, in twenty years, go through 30,000 copies: not in one year, or in two: but in twenty years. We may assign 500 readers to each copy: we assume, therefore, 15,000,000 readers of the volume, which, with those who read the novel in serial form, makes about 20,000,000 readers in all. I beg you to consider these figures. You may apply them to any popular writer of the day you please: and I think you will agree with me that a circulation so widespread has never before been even approached in any country, or even dreamed of. And more—this is only a beginning. In fifty years time, unless some check—some overwhelm-

ing national disaster—happens to this country, or the United States, or to our colonies, the population of the English-speaking race will be more than doubled. There will be at least two hundred-and-fifty millions—all of them, on an average, far better educated than at the present moment, and all readers of books. Imagine, more or less, if you can, the position of a writer who has won the heart of only a tenth part of those people! Imagine his power for good or for evil! Think of the overwhelming admiration and respect which he will possess. No prince ever had such power: no statesman ever commanded such influence: as will be possessed by that most fortunate of men, the popular poet, dramatist, novelist, of the future.

You have seen something of the Literary Life in the past and of that in the present. You can guess by what has gone before what will be my forecast of the Literary Life in the future. It is this:

There will be in every country forming part of the English-speaking nations a *local* literature of its own: that is to say, a literature in matters historical, educational, ecclesiastical, topographical, and local from every point of view: there will be writers of fiction, poetry, drama, who will have a local name and local fame only: who will be unable to pass beyond the boundaries of their country: who will, in fact, write for that country and for nothing else. There will, however, arise another and an independent literature

which shall be English: not, that is, belonging to the little country of England, but called English because written in that language. In other words, there will be a locally human literature and a universally human literature. The latter part will appeal to all alike who speak and write our language, and the man who succeeds in contributing to that which is human will be the fortunate, the distinguished, the enviable author of whom we have just spoken.

Again, while all other professions will in the immediate future suffer loss in many ways from the competition—the crowding into them, for instance, of the poor lads from the Polytechnics, no such competition can lower, or injure in any way the profession of letters as regards its highest achievements. For, however many may try, the really great prizes can never be awarded but by the universal suffrage. For a man to be read by the whole of the English-speaking world, he must move the hearts of all that world. It may be objected that the great mass of readers will prefer the baser literature to the nobler. I do not think it conceivably possible that any writer of the lower class should become popular outside his own country. I have looked in vain, for instance, on the American bookstalls for the bad writers of this country. On the other hand, it is quite clear, as can be learned from the returns of the public libraries, that in the long run the taste of the people is sound and

wholesome. So long as they read Scott, and Macaulay, and Dickens, and Marryatt, one may trust the taste of the people. A bad writer may win an audience for awhile, but he cannot keep his hold. For my own part, I can remember no single instance, in literary history, of the survival of a bad writer. Let me, in this place, add one word of caution. I have spoken of this vast circle of readers. Remember, please, that I do not say—buyers. As things are at present, so must they always be: we may enlarge the circle of readers till it includes every man, woman, and child in the English-speaking world: but we cannot at the same time enlarge their incomes. If we suppose that a man buys two books a week—not novels only—and that the average cost of these books is 2*s.* each, that would mean an expenditure of over 10*l.* a year in books. Now there are not many incomes—and there never will be—that can stand the expenditure of over 10*l.* a year in books, which are not necessaries, such as lodging and food. While, in fact, the readers multiply by the hundredfold, there will be a tendency for the number of buyers to contract in proportion, simply because the incomes will not increase with the demand for literature, and they cannot afford to buy all they want. There will be always a few who can afford to buy books, and will buy books, but for the mass of the world the free library will always afford a continuous and an inexhaustible

supply of reading. I offer this warning so that you may not think that we are considering, or taking into account the wealth which in the future may flow into the coffers of the successful author. That will, no doubt, be very considerable. But in this place I desire to consider nothing but the extension of his influence, his authority, and his respect. I hope that these words, and the chapters which follow, will not induce any young man hastily to abandon his present employment, in order to embark upon the profession of letters. The old miseries are gone, it is true: but there are many broken hearts, many cruel disappointments, many bitter disillusions even in the present day.

The Literary Life may be, I am firmly convinced, in spite of many dangers and drawbacks, by far the happiest life that the Lord has permitted mortal man to enjoy. I say this with the greatest confidence, and after considering the history of all those literary men—living and dead—whom I have known and of whom I have read. It may be by far the happiest life attainable. But I admit that without a reasonable measure of success it must be a disappointed and a miserable life. That reasonable measure of success is an essential. Therefore, I repeat, I should be very sorry indeed if, by any words of mine, any young man should be persuaded to exchange his certain work, whatever it is, for an uncertain plunge into literature.

To those few, however, who think they possess the necessary qualifications: to those who feel really impelled to join the ranks of literature; I would say "Come. Venture, if you will, where so many have failed. There is always room for good work—Come. I have shown how the followers of literature fare: some fare better and some worse than I have described. Come, if you can: come, if you dare. Don't think of making money—there are a thousand chances to one against it: but if you gain that reasonable measure of success of which I have spoken, you may confidently look forward to leading a happy and a well filled life: you may influence your generation for good: your mind will be always pleasantly occupied: you will find the company good: the talk extremely cheerful: and the work always interesting."

BOOK I.

Chapter I.—Preparation.

The foregoing contains general considerations. Let us turn to the special object of this work. It is to examine into the practical details of the profession of Literature: to ascertain some of the qualifications necessary for success: to indicate some of the dangers and pitfalls which lie in the way: to lay down, in general terms, the preparation which may be most useful to the aspirant: to show the kind of livelihood which may be earned in the profession of literature, as in those of medicine or law: and to warn the reader against the tricks and subterfuges by which crafty persons are always endeavouring to acquire the control of literary property for their own ends: to instruct him how to defeat these tricks: and to explain what literary property really means in the eyes of the law.

I desire that this book may reach the hands of all those young people—they number thou-

sands—who are now gazing with longing eyes upon a Land that seems full of Promise—the Literary Land. I hope that the information which they will find here will either strengthen their resolution to go on, or will cause them to turn back while there is yet time. Let it be remembered—it cannot be too often repeated—that there is no disappointment more bitter, harder to bear, than failure, when one has attempted the Career of Letters. On the other hand, there is no happiness so great as success.

What then do we mean by the Literary Life? It is a life of study: a life of imagination: a life of meditation: a life of observation: or a life of research: in every case accompanied by, and carried on for, the production of Literature.

In desiring the Literary Life everyone, perhaps unconsciously, proposes brotherhood with the illustrious company of those who are, or have been, the leaders. Surely it is worth while to engage upon a work where there are such noble fellow workers in a spirit of seriousness. A more practical reason is that unless the work is attempted seriously the result will be failure. That is quite certain. Failure. The popular idea is that poems, plays, essays, romances, stories, are the gifts of Fortune, and come by chance without any effort on the part of the writer. That is a common belief and a common error. Put it away from you at the outset. Prepare for serious work. Make up your mind

that you cannot give to the work too careful preparation: too serious consideration: that you cannot correct your work too jealously: that you must be prepared to write and to rewrite, if necessary, with patience, until you have produced your effect. Above all things, therefore, mistrust the work that has been "thrown off:" put away in a drawer all work that is done "at a dash:" prepare to rewrite, or perhaps to destroy all the work executed under conditions of rapidity and the "white heat" or the "red glow" or the "fine ardour" of literary composition. The white heat is good for the first rough sketch: it is seldom, however, good for much more.

What follows then, is written in the belief that I am addressing those who take the matter seriously; so seriously that they will be ready to give to their work all they have: all their heart: all their strength: all their soul.

Then, if they fail, they will fail with honour. And they will be rewarded by the acquisition of culture: by fulness of knowledge: by literary taste: by acquired power of observation: and by breadth of view.

The first qualification necessary in every branch of the literary calling is a mind stored with knowledge: this can only be obtained by wide reading: the first duty of the young writer is to read: nay, the first sign of his fitness for the work is a love of reading. If we consider

every recorded case of the boyhood of great writers, we shall find that as a boy the writer was an omnivorous reader: he read every book that his home contained, and borrowed all the books he could get at, sometimes for miles round: he became, in the course of his reading, a rapid reader—all omnivorous readers are rapid: his taste for reading was Catholic: he read every kind of book: his mind was retentive: his memory was strong: he had the gift of being able to dismiss from his mind the non-essential parts of what he read. Some writers betray their reading by continual reference to books and quotation: a better way is to show it by that wealth and fulness which can only come by wide reading.

I should advise the young reader not to ask himself too anxiously what books are best for him. He may read all. But there should be preferences. For instance, if he have access to a library let him eschew for the moment the modern novel while he makes himself master of the great works in English literature. It is absolutely necessary: it is indispensable, that he should read and know Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Addison, Fielding, Smollett, Johnson, Cowper, Wordsworth, Keats, Byron, Coleridge, Charles Lamb, Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, and a great many others, here omitted. As for contemporary work, he must read some, if only

in order to catch the manner of his own generation, but he should be careful not to read a book simply because it is for the moment talked about. A better way would be to neglect, for the day, the book of the day—and to read it, if it survives so long—to-morrow.

Translations again, must not be neglected. Rabelais, for those who have sympathy with the allegorical method : Voltaire : Goethe's Faust : Don Quixote : Dante : Victor Hugo : Tolstoy : and a few others who may be added from time to time. This array of reading is formidable to look at : but a young man, even if he does not begin until twenty one, would quickly and easily get through it. Besides, most young men at twenty one, have already read a great deal of this Corpus of Literature. And it must be acknowledged that a young writer who has read all these authors is already, so far, well equipped.

In this list of books I have not included any of the Greek and Latin classics. I suppose that most of my readers have been at school and have there made acquaintance with the Greek poets, as well as with the Latins. If that is not the case, one can only say that while nothing can ever compensate for the loss of Latin and Greek, it would be well to read translations of some parts at least of the classical writers. It would seem, indeed, as if the classical "mill" is not absolutely necessary. Keats, for instance, knew nothing of Greek poetry in the original.

The second consideration, that which follows the question of reading; is the art of arrangement. That is to say, the student of English composition must aim at presenting, in their most effective form, the arguments, facts, illustrations, quotations or opinions which the writer desires to use for his purpose. By the most effective form I mean the most convincing, the most persuasive, and the most pleasing manner. Unless the writer can arrive at this art, either by comparison and observation or by the study of books, he is lost: he has no chance whatever of a hearing. It is impossible to over-rate the importance of this difficulty. The writer has a thing to say: a thesis to maintain: a story to tell: how is he to present it?

I know a case in which a young man, now a well-known writer, derived the greatest benefit, at the very beginning of his career, from attending a short course of logic and another of rhetoric. The former taught him how to analyse an argument: it cleared up his mind and showed him where to look for the weak point, and how to test the strong point, of a proposition. The latter was still more useful, for it taught him the utility of rules in composition: and of exercise in composition: the difference between addressing the understanding and addressing the feelings: the value of style: in a word, how to arrange and to set forth his arguments with the view of producing the greatest possible effect.

It is not often that a young man has the chance of attending a course of rhetoric: I do not think it is possible to find such a thing at this moment in the whole of London. But books are always accessible. If I recommend the reader to study carefully Whately's *Rhetoric* it is because the book was in use in my time. It is probably long since superseded, in which case the later book will probably be the more convenient. At the same time there is a mass of information and of suggestion in Whately which cannot but prove helpful to the student.

There was formerly a good old rule by which boys in writing themes or essays, had to divide them into certain heads. There were (1) Preface: (2) Reason: (3) Argument: (4) Simile: (5) Quotation: (6) Metaphor: (7) Confirmation: (8) Conclusion. This was a rough and ready method of teaching arrangement, but it was effective as far as it went, and I commend a consideration of it to a beginner. I do not think that boys made to write under such conditions would often in after life fall into the sin of confusion. To this day, when I hear a speech, or read a paper, in which the arguments are advanced loosely, in the wrong place, overlapping each other, I say to myself "Dear Sir, where is your Argument? What have you done with your Confirmation? And your Reason is out of place."

Can style be learned or taught? Certainly

not: style belongs to a man like his face, his figure, or his voice. It is his own individual attribute. It cannot be taught or learned. But it may be cultivated. I have sometimes seen a recommendation to read Louis Stevenson or Walter Pater. The reason for studying the style of another man is to acquire, not his style, but the sense that style is a part of literature. I would rather recommend Addison, Pope and Goldsmith. Style without "preciosity": natural style: fitness of phrase: clearness and "netteté": a style without mannerism: yet wholly individual: this seems to me more likely to be attained by the reading of Addison than by that of Stevenson. The reading of good pure English is certain to produce the sense of style and the effort to write a good style. The rest follows. But the student must not be carried away. The end of literature is not style. Style is the servant not the master: we desire style as the vehicle not the matter: the medium of expression must be the humble servant of the dominant thought.

I pass on to the next point.

It is almost indispensable that a literary man with pretensions to culture, should possess a knowledge of some foreign language. Not a smattering, but the power of reading and understanding it as well as his own. Of course, French is by far the most useful, because the literature of France is far finer and fuller than those of all

the other continental nations put together. It may, however, be useful for special purposes to study other languages, as German, Italian, Norwegian—but French must come first. The importance of French to a man of letters consists not only in the beauty and fulness of its literature, but in the clearness and precision of the best French writers: the style, in which there is never a word too much, and never a word in the wrong place: the construction, which is generally admirable: the broad views of the best French writers: their freedom from the cant into which our own writers are sometimes prone to fall: and from the sentimentality from which the French hardness keeps their writers free. The influence of French Literature on every branch of our own is most marked. In his essays, for instance, Louis Stevenson recalls Montaigne at every line: in fiction, one need only repeat the fact without proving it on living writers: in verse there are living poets among us who seem to write always with their French models lying open before them.

The next point for the attention of the young writer is the cultivation of himself. All that belongs to cultivation belongs to Literature. Poetry and Fiction are Fine Arts as much as Painting and Sculpture. One cannot bring to any Fine Art too much general culture—too much outside culture. Even in Science the man of culture will treat his subject far more

attractively, and therefore more convincingly, than the man who has attended exclusively to his own branch of Science. Let the young writer find time for the study of Painting: of Music: of Statuary: it will help him only to feel that the painter, the composer, the sculptor are trying, like himself, to express their thought, each in his own medium: one with oils on a canvas: one in marble: one with musical notes. I would not have my student aim at becoming an Art Critic: or talk the Art jargon of the day, which changes from year to year—that is another thing: but I would have him study Art, so as to understand its history; to have a feeling for the artistic work of every age: to be able to discern the connection between the intention and the achievement. If he can do this he will connect himself with the mind of the small but highly important section of humanity which lives for Art and has lived for Art for the last five hundred years.

The study of Art in any branch or in all its branches, will also prove useful in other ways. It fills the mind with the love of Beauty: it enables the student to transfer the sense of Beauty to his own pages: it purifies and elevates his taste: it tends to make him as careful of phrase and word as the painter is careful of light and shade: of curve and colour. And, since everything that may be said of Art may also be said of Literature and *vice versâ*, this

study enables a young man to frame for himself canons of criticism and to establish for himself standards of excellence.

The writer's standard, thus formed, will be practical, because he will understand the difficulties and the limitations: he will be more lenient than the ordinary critic who recognizes nothing but the results: he will also be more severe because he will understand the process.

It is most necessary that the young writer should very early arrive at a high standard—higher than he can at first hope to reach: it is most important that he should judge himself by canons of criticism more severe than he would willingly apply to others.

When I think of the slipshod work: the ill-arranged work: the bad construction: the creeping style; which those who have to read MSS. constantly meet, I am constrained to urge with the utmost force these suggestions as to the formation of standards and canons of criticism capable of being applied by the writer to his own work.

Meanwhile, let us suppose that he has begun to work. For one may, and should, begin to work while he is pursuing his studies.

As a first rule, I advise the student to write something every day.

This rule does not mean that he should write in order to acquire facility of writing. Mere facility is nothing: it is the most common of all

gifts : any school girl of fifteen may have it. Indeed, it is a dangerous and a suspicious gift. The writer who has facility of the pen finds that his pen is his master : it runs away with him : it will not stick to the subject : in other words the writer's brain is not under his control. The rule to write something every day means a daily effort, not to write fast, but to master and subdue the brain. Its main object is to meet the danger of facility. For I want the student to write "Something" : that is, something definite : an essay in which a certain thesis has to be advanced and maintained : a sketch of character, in which a portrait has to be painted in a few strokes : a description in which everything external has to be excluded : in a word, one thing, and one thing only, has to be set down. The young man of the facile pen will find it running along the lines talking of this and of that, but not of the thing in hand. He will have to reduce that pen—which is his own brain—to obedience : or there is no hope for him. In other words, he must learn to think clearly and to regard a subject with concentration : next he must bring to his writing the clearness and concentration of his thought.

This mastery over the pen is really a point of the highest importance : it means nothing less than the power of making the brain obey. The untrained brain wanders here and there : it forgets what was intended : it flies about from one

subject to another : it will not be fixed. Everyone must remember the time in his own experience when his writing rambled and his brain wandered. The richer the gifts of imagination and fancy the greater is the danger on this head. When the young writer feels his page aglow with imagination let him be most on his guard : the work, put away awhile, will almost certainly prove to be that of an unordered mind. The brain must be trained to obey, and the will must be taught to command.

In this sketch of the general preparation for the Literary Life I must repeat the point on which I most insisted at the outset. I said that the student must be prepared to take pains. Let me put it in another way : the student must bring to the calling the power and the will to work : he must be patient and industrious : he must not be daunted by early failure : he must not be inflated by early success : "swelled head" is a disease which is very apt to seize upon the literary youth : he must be ready to acknowledge that there is still something wanting : he must be ready to persevere, even although he seems successful. If after all, it is no use trying : if he really has not the gifts necessary for success ; he will find out the distressing truth by the candour of his friends ; by the opinion of a reader ; or by his own perception.

Chapter II.

Of Those who enter the Literary Life.

Who are they, the modern followers of Literature?

I have already observed that the lives of men of letters in very many cases, show a false start: at the outset they have entered upon some calling which they have afterwards abandoned or exchanged for the profession of letters. Thus, Johnson began life as a schoolmaster: Fielding was a barrister: Goldsmith, Smollett, and Akenside were physicians: Scott was a writer to the Signet: Coleridge was a Unitarian preacher: Dickens was a reporter. Some men have held posts of a kind which allowed the following of letters—Burns, Charles Lamb, Wordsworth, Trollope; some again, have enjoyed private means—Pope, Cowper, Keats, Shelley, Byron, Thackeray, Tennyson, Browning. I speak of those only who belong to the majority: yet of living writers almost the same

thing might be said : not, however, to so great an extent, because a large number of living writers have begun with journalism in one or other of its branches : and journalism during the last fifty years has proved a handmaid or a ladder to literature.

The literary profession has been reproached with this fact. It has been said that its most successful followers are failures in other callings. This is hardly fair, because there is no disgrace in failing in a profession for which one has no natural aptitude. The intellectual qualities which are wanted for a poet are not always those required for a lawyer.

In fact, a man intended by nature to succeed as a writer may enter upon any profession he pleases : it matters little what : there is no hope for him so long as he remains outside the work for which he has been destined. There is no other call which is so imperative when it comes, and so difficult to be disobeyed. At the same time, one must not mistake an ardent yearning after the gifts for the Divine Call.

The false start is remarkable chiefly among those who belong to the imaginative side of literature : to the poet, the dramatist, the novelist. An immense amount of literature, however, is contributed by those whose profession naturally leads to writing. The student, the scholar, the professor, the lecturer, the man of science ; every one of these must at

some time or other give the world the results of his studies and researches in a more durable form than that of a lecture, and in a more popular form than that of a collection of learned transactions. There are, again, professional books and technical books of all kinds to be written: the books, that is, written by lawyers for themselves: by physicians for other physicians: by civil engineers for other engineers: every profession must have its own books for its own use. Schoolmasters, again, write educational books: travellers make up books from their notes: and many men are authors of one book only—the one book which their life and adventures have made them competent to write.

Many of those who write books, professional or technical, really lead the literary life first and the professional life next. Thus, the late Sir John Robert Seeley, was Regius Professor in the University of Cambridge. As such he gave courses of lectures: but if he had ever described himself he would have called himself an author by profession: all his reading and all his thoughts from the beginning to the end of his career were consciously directed to subjects on which he proposed to teach the world by means of books. Others, again, write books by a kind of accident. Thus, a man is invited to contribute a book for a series. There is no reason why the series should have been started, except that the publisher thinks he can sell it: there is again no

special reason why this man or that man should write any one of the books: yet those who edit the series know that such an one is a good man of letters who knows something of the subject and will turn out a creditable volume. That is the reason why he is asked: there is no call upon him to write it: the work is placed in his hands by a kind of accident. For example, a schoolmaster compiles an algebra or a book of Latin exercises: there are hundreds of such books. Why should he compile another? Well, for the reason that he wants to introduce some little points of difference in the treatment: for the reason that text books are always changing: for the reason that a publisher invites him: for the reason that it seems to be a crime in an educational text book, and punishable by death, to be more than three or four years old.

There are, again, certain writers who, in numbers, are greater than all the rest put together. I mean the people who do nothing else but write; who live by writing; yet are not journalists. A great many of those who read these pages desire to join this noble company—mostly of martyrs.

There are at this moment in the country hundreds of papers and journals and magazines, weekly and monthly, published at prices varying from half-a-crown to a penny, the latter, of course, vastly outnumbering the former. The circulation of some is enormous, far beyond the

wildest dreams of twenty years ago: they are the favourite reading of millions who until the last few years never read anything: they are the outcome of the School Board, which pours out every year by thousands, by the hundred thousand, boys and girls into whom they have instilled, as one result of these standards, a love of reading. The favourite amusement of these young people is reading. It is, of course, nonsense to suppose that they read for study: they read for amusement: and it is, or should be, a more desirable and more innocent form of amusement than the billiard room and the music hall and the tavern bar, or the pavement in the company of a girl. The penny journals cater for young people: they provide, week by week, things that will amuse them: stories, long and short: papers descriptive—all kinds of papers: papers of adventures, of travel, of history; all kinds of papers, except papers critical and literary: they demand a continual supply of these things: they want, also, anecdotes, paragraphs, and personal gossip: they want questions and answers: they want verses: they want riddles: they want, in a word, everything that their *clientèle*, which is not by any means confined to former children of the Board Schools, will find amusing.

It is not uncommon, with certain superior persons, to point the finger of scorn at these papers. The act betrays ignorance. The critic who speaks with contempt of a penny paper

circulating by the hundred thousand does not understand that it expresses a certain stage in the growth of the mind, a stage out of which the stronger and the keener mind will presently emerge : when the paper is read by the middle aged it appeals to a certain stage beyond which that class of mind could never grow. It is quite as unjust to pour contempt on such an intellectual stage as it is to pour contempt upon the small stature of the growing lad. But to provide this literature thousands of pens are at work every day.

Who, then, are the component figures in this vast army ? They come from all parts : there are clergymen in their country parishes : the wives and daughters of clergymen : the daughters of the middle class in town or country—the girls' high schools are enormously contributing to the ranks of those who write : there are elderly single women who ardently desire to add a little to their incomes : there are professional men, civil service men, clerks, actuated by the same motive : it is impossible to say how deep down or how widespread is the ambition to make money by writing—I say to make money. That is the dominant idea. The hope of writing well, and of adding to literature, if that may be, is another thing altogether. It ought to be that hope, always, but we have here to deal with the truth, which is, that these writers take up the pen in the hope of making money. It is im-

possible to compute their number. One may only guess in the roughest manner. If a penny weekly engages practically the work of about fifteen people on each issue, and admits a paper from each person not oftener than once a month, we have sixty persons engaged upon that one paper. There are — say — 200 such papers. Therefore there are 12,000 persons who contribute to these journals. Of course they cannot all live by their work. Probably not more than a fifth part do. That makes, however, 2,400 persons, men and women, who actually live by writing stories and papers for the penny weeklies, while there are many thousands more who add to their incomes by doing so.*

But there is another company—that of the people who write the penny "novelette." No one knows how to arrive at the number of those who write these things, or the number of penny "novelettes" which are published. Some of the writers are ladies—well-to-do ladies, not in the least obliged to work—who slave for a trifle in writing these things; and have not even the satisfaction, in most cases, of seeing their names on the title page. Why do they do it? They are ashamed to avow their work. They do not want the miserable pay. Why do they do it? I know not.

* I advance these figures with the greatest diffidence. I am aware that they are only an approximation, and I am suspicious that the numbers are much under-estimated.

Let us take a step upwards. There are the better class magazines. It would be difficult for a writer to live by contributing to these magazines. But everyone who writes may, and often does, add to his income by sending in an occasional paper. These magazines are, very properly and very usefully, reserved as much as possible for writers who are specialists : for men who have a helpful word to say on a subject of the moment : there are, for instance, few papers which do more to form public opinion than the *Nineteenth Century* or the *Contemporary* : it is not often, therefore, that the *littérateur*, pure and simple, gets a chance, and then it is generally by means of a critical study, a biographical sketch accepted and put in to fill up, and with the editor's full consciousness that the general public do not want this kind of paper at all. Such a paper is, however, if it is well done, very acceptable to the small class who do care for literary and critical papers.

Lastly, there are the novelists. Where do they come from? From all the professions. How many of them are there? If we take a catalogue of W. H. Smith's books for sale we find a list of novels filling many pages. Yet these are not all. These are only the novels which, out of the great mass published, have been taken by W. H. Smith and Son for their circulating library. I believe that their general rule is to take all the books that are asked for. The list,

therefore, should be a complete exhibition of all the novels worth reading, or thought, by people of various tastes, to be worth reading. I have had a catalogue made of the novelists whose books are in this list: of those who have succeeded, more or less. The reader will be surprised to learn that there are at this moment, no fewer than 1300 novelists, all in demand; some in great demand; some in small demand. Out of these there are, first of all, thirty or forty very much in demand: next, fifty in demand which should prove enough to repay the author for his time and for his labour: thirdly, a long line of names, some 250 in all, whose novels pay their expenses and a little over: while the rest are an uncertain quantity, most not paying more than their bare expenses, while a very large number—no one can ever learn how many—are produced at the cost of the writer. But consider this broad fact—there is an army of 1300 living novelists, all of whom produce books for which there is some demand!

We are now, perhaps, able to form some estimate of the immense number of persons who are engaged in the production of current literature in all its branches.

(i.) There are, first of all, the scholars and learned professors at the universities and great colleges with most of whom the production of one book or of many books on their own subjects is a part of their professional work.

(ii.) There are philosophers and scientific men, professors and lecturers. Every branch of philosophy and of science has its writers: most branches number many writers.

(iii.) There are the writers on art in all its branches.

(iv.) There are the writers of one book—say a book of travels.

(v.) There are men and women of letters who write biographies, essays, critical papers, reviews for the journals, papers for the magazines, and books on literary subjects which the world for the most part receives coldly, though the reviewers acknowledge their literary importance.

(vi.) There are the poets, who very often take upon themselves as well the *rôle* of critic. With these must be ranked the other writers of imaginative work—of fiction and the drama.

(vii.) There are the writers of technical books, of whom there are many to every craft, art, mystery, or profession.

(viii.) There are the writers of educational books.

(ix.) There are the contributors to the penny weeklies.

(x.) There are the writers of the penny dreadfuls.

You now understand why, in the Introduction, I estimated the number of men and women who are more or less engaged in literary work,

at twenty thousand. I am sure that this number is not exaggerated, great as it may appear. To produce and publish the works of this multitude there are in London, over four hundred publishers, according to the London Directory: there are also in London twenty-five daily papers: fifty weeklies: and over seventy monthly papers and magazines to engage the flying pen. In this number I do not include the journalists proper. In another chapter Journalism as a branch of the Literary Life, will be treated by a practised journalist.

Chapter III.

Critic and Essayist.

I proceed to consider, briefly, the various branches of the literary life. They may be called respectively those of Observation : of Imagination : of Education : of Science : of History : of Philosophy : of Art : and of Theology. Most of these branches require little comment or explanation.

I have placed "Observation" in the first place, because observation is really the beginning, and the middle, and the end, of all literature. He who observes lays a foundation of fact on which he may build his edifice, whether of poetry, fiction, philosophy, or art. He has before him, for observation, the whole field of Nature and the whole field of Humanity. Reasoning, systematic philosophy, religion, prophetic vision, dream of poet, unless based on observation of the facts and forces of nature and humanity, is naught. The first duty, therefore, of the one who aims at explaining or instructing is to observe.

The power of observation can be acquired by practice. For my own part I have always found it useful to write down, upon returning home after a walk, notes on the persons, the objects, the buildings, the scenery, the flowers, etc., that I have observed during that walk. Some such practice as this, carried on regularly, cultivates the memory: teaches the eyes to see things quickly—slow sight is worse than short sight: makes a young writer understand the necessity of selection and gives interest even to a ride in a tramcar or an omnibus where there are always faces to be read and things to be heard. A great conjuror once taught his son the power and practice of observation by making him describe after passing a shop what he had seen in the window. Let each for himself devise his own method, provided that he recognise the paramount importance of observation.

If observation is necessary in all branches of literature, it is above everything in the branch occupied by the essayist and the critic. To them it means the consideration of the world, with the intention of comment or explanation. All who consider the ways and doings of men; who take notes with the view of making forecasts or discovering tendencies; who study the forces at work; the ideas of the day: the religious thought of the time; the teaching, beliefs, prejudices, extravagancies, ambitions and ideals of the day, are essentially observers. Every man who gets

into a pulpit; every man who speaks in the House of Commons; every man who writes a leading article: every man who writes on any social topic: is, in fact, an observer. As such, he takes upon himself the duties and the profession of preacher, teacher, or critic. The critic not only weighs and judges the thing done, but also, by so doing, teaches what should be done. More; since the principal function—the most useful function—of the prophet, is to see clearly the present and what it means: those who assume the profession of critic, do in fact, though unconsciously, assume the cloak of Elijah.

The prophetic robe will appear to most of us impossible to seize and to wear. But there are many to whom the position of critic, which they do not associate with the prophetic robe, appears both desirable and honourable.

It is, in fact, both desirable and honourable. It is an excellent thing that there should be critics in everything. In those branches where there are no critics, there is languor and decay. For example, the preaching in the Church of England is not regarded as a proper field for the critic: the result is that the pulpit has fallen into a languishing condition; as an organ for moving the people and creating opinion it is practically dead. In all other branches whenever criticism, sound, just, and unbiassed, by personal motives, is brought to bear, health and vigour are maintained.

For every branch of human achievement there must be its own special critic, conversant with the work, its possibilities, its limitations, and its difficulties: thus, there is the critic of strategy: there is the critic of the drama: the critic of painting: the critic of music: the critic of architecture: the critic of poetry: the critic of history: the critic of philosophy: the critic of matters Indian, colonial, continental or otherwise: the critic of fiction: the critic of *belles lettres:* and many more. And these are all different: no one, for instance, would profess at the same time to be a critic of painting and a critic of philosophy. This fact is recognised by the editors of the best papers, which do not assign to the same hand widely different branches of work. Every special critic wants his special training. And a man who can write well with special knowledge, with authority and instruction, upon any one branch, is certain to command success.

No man, however, can say, "I will be a critic." For no man, unless to the manner born, can become a critic. The born critic may be recognised by the way in which he approaches every subject. He preserves a somewhat cold manner: he is never carried away: at the theatre his business is with the actor as well as with the fable: he keeps outside the story, by which he is seldom moved to laughter or to tears: he is thinking the whole time of the per-

formance and how the parts are played. At a restaurant, even, he takes the dishes in the same critical spirit: he falls into no enthusiasm over the wine or the food; he considers it with reference to his own standards. For everything on which he forms an opinion, he has a standard by which to judge of its excellencies, or its shortcomings. A critic of this kind may be found in every club and in every society of man, though not, perhaps, a literary critic.

The reader will do well to consider this branch of the literary life. It is not engrossing, like poetry: he can carry it on with other pursuits. The foundation of the literary life is a full mind: but for critical work special knowledge is required: let the young critic therefore take up his own line and make it his own by study. He must take care to acquire for himself standards and canons of criticism; he must read the critical work of those who can teach him—there are not many. As critics of literature, for instance, John Morley; Leslie Stephen; Professor Dowden; Professor Saintsbury; Walter Pater; Ste Beuve; Austin Dobson; are names that occur. Let him be careful not to read inferior criticism which cannot help him and is likely to injure the taste.

I exhort him to remember that he is undertaking a line of literary work most difficult, as requiring always a sane mind, a sound judgment, and a mind free from the intoxication of an

author's style or his subject; it is indeed a work of the deepest responsibility. He will understand that his judgment — he has veritably placed himself upon the bench—is not a question of liking or disliking: it is a judicial charge to the public, who constitute the jury; it is his business to explain the Law—in this case the Law is found in the canons of criticism: he must interpret the case for the reader; he must consider the subject first, what the writer intended; the treatment, next;—how the writer divides the word; the style afterwards—how the writer handles his points; he must show his jury how the case stands after the Law has been applied. Here the analogy ceases, because although the Law can be laid down on broad general lines, there are cases, constantly occurring in which the application of the law seems impossible. In such cases the critic will have to stretch the Law or to neglect the Law, either on his own judgment.

The literary critic may be a lecturer on History or Literature: at the outset he may be a University man with a reputation for reading and ability; he may begin by writing for the monthly magazines—a very good way of getting some reputation; he generally begins by being "put on" as occasional reviewer of books for one of the papers. This is a kind of work which if he enters upon it with a conscience, will test his ability and prove his critical powers. For

the space allotted to the review of a single book is in most papers so small that the ordinary reviewer cannot afford the time to read any of the books sent to him. For instance, a man may be expected to "review" eight or ten novels in a single column. This is, of course, absurd—still, a quarter or a third of a column is in many cases the most that can be offered. Let the young reviewer make the most of his opportunities. Let him, at the cost of much time unrewarded, make each review a serious one. Let him never deride; or call names; or forget that he is a gentleman speaking (presumably) of another gentleman or gentlewoman. If the piece is bad through and through, it should be a question whether it is worth noticing at all: in any case, the critic must remain courteous; and the author, while he is condemned judicially, which is far more effective than being condemned with derision, or with "smartness," or with impudence, will have had an opportunity of learning at least the reason of his failure.

The substitution of courtesy and good manners in the critical columns in place of the old blackguard "slating" is only a thing of yesterday. There still survive some of the old school who think it right to enliven (!) the columns with unmannerly abuse and with misrepresentation. Let the young critic bear it in mind, and remember that it is due to himself as well as his author to treat him with the courtesy due from one gentleman to another.

Many complaints have been made about the "log-rolling" of friends and private malice of enemies. That there is still too much of both is too true—and it is disgraceful to the profession at large: there are, however, many critics who are entirely above any influences of any kind. When such practices exist it is mainly the fault of the editor who does not take care that his books are placed in the hands of persons who are neither personal friends nor personal enemies of the writer. The *Critic* of New York sets us an admirable example in this respect. The writer who accepts a book for that paper has to declare that he is neither a friend nor an enemy of the author. In a word, the young man who desires to be a literary critic desires a great thing: a most useful thing: a most responsible thing: one which should require the long preparation which makes a scholar and continual additions to his knowledge: with patience, courtesy, fairness, and never ending sense of responsibility.

What has been said concerning the literary critic may also be said of the Art critic, the Musical critic, the Dramatic critic. The aspirant must study and know his subject. For my own part, I do not believe in the judgments of an art critic who is not himself an artist; or has at least attempted the art seriously. Nor do I believe in the judgments of a Musical critic who is not a musician. However deeply the

so-called critic may have studied history of Art, however carefully he may have worked through galleries, learned to compare, learned the qualities of every painter of every school; if he knows nothing of the actual work; if he does not appreciate from experience the difficulties and the technicalities, the possibilities and the limitations of art, which can only be learned in the practical work of the studio; there will always be something lacking in his critical work. So also with music. How can a man, however well versed in the history of music; and conversant with the greatest works, really write about music when he cannot play any instrument, and knows nothing of the difficulties which lie before the composer? There are now so many schools of art and music that it should be possible to find young men or women who do really know practically the technical part of the art, and are so far qualified to take up the *rôle* of critic. At the same time, since most men will always think that it is better to be a third-rate painter than a first-rate critic, the latter will always be considered as more or less a failure.

The special critic, once recognised, may expect a reasonably fair share of work. Exhibitions of pictures, new and old, are always being opened. Add to this that books of art of all kinds are always coming out—it would seem that every year must bring out some new and important

work on art ; and the magazines are always calling for more papers on subjects connected with art. Such papers, in fact, have taken the place of the old literary critical paper, which is now seldom asked for.

The leader writer belongs to Journalism, on which a chapter will be found later on (p. 231). It is enough in this place to recognise him as belonging to the learned profession of critic and to claim for him the indispensable and essential qualities of scholarship and study of politics, social and political economy, and history ancient, modern, and of to-day. There are many who consider the leader writer as occupying the most important place in literature because he leads or guides popular opinion. If you listen to the average talk in a train or at a dinner, or wherever men meet, you will recognise that the opinion is that of yesterday's leader. How does a man arrive at this enviable post ? At first, he must be a scholar and a student. This will take him a good many years. There are not so many scholars and students that one ever remains unknown. Many leader writers have come from fellowships at Oxford and Cambridge, their reputation made before they move to London. If the reader desires to become a leader writer he must first qualify by study. If he is endowed with the necessary gifts—the power of writing and the power of vision there should not be any great difficulty in his way.

Of essayists, the literary or Art critic is the most common. But the essayist proper is the observer by profession ; he who takes a subject and deals with it, writing round it as Montaigne did, or upon it as Johnson and Addison did, has chosen a line of literature which is the most delightful and may be most popular. Who would not wish that he could write the Essays of Elia ? Our literature is singularly rich in essayists ; a good essayist has a great chance of success ; if he is successful he should be happy in commanding the affections of the people as well as their admiration ; and the art of writing essays can be acquired, and followed, in addition to the ordinary work of bread-winning. I do not like to instance living writers, but I may indicate Louis Stevenson, who has so recently left us, to our sorrow and loss, as an instance of the successful essayist. His charm is that of manner and style, rather than of thought. But people like manner and style more than thought : and it may be safely said that the affections of the world have been bestowed far more readily upon Stevenson, the essayist, than upon Stevenson, the novelist.

Chapter IV.

The Life of Imagination.

I. The Poet.

In treating of Imaginative Literature one thing is most certain that, without the gift, it cannot be taught. No one by working can confer upon himself the power of writing verse, telling stories, or making dramas. But for those who are to the manner born these pages may present some points of helpfulness, information, advice, or suggestion.

If good advice was ever taken there would be no poets. For certain it is that the History of Literature is full of warnings against becoming a Poet. If starvation deterred there would be no poets, for it is impossible, as a rule, to live by poetry. Yet some poets have lived by their verse. Milton was a school-master first and a secretary afterwards: Burns and Wordsworth followed other occupations: Pope, Cowper, Byron, Keats, Shelley, Tennyson, Browning, were all enabled to write because they were possessed of private

means and were not compelled to earn their bread. The poetic temperament, with all except a few, demands absolute freedom, so that the man may wander when and whither he pleases, at his own sweet will, bound by no duties, subject to no master; called upon to exercise no functions; to think of nothing but his work: to produce as he pleases, as the mood takes him. It is true that there are poets who are journalists, critics, and reviewers: who belong to professions—are they not all minor poets? In order to become a great poet, it seems almost necessary that a man must be free.

The history of poets establishes the fact that the poetic instinct is often so strong, even though the outcome lands the writer only among the minor poets, that youth, once called, cannot choose but obey. Well for the poet, then, if his standards are simple and his wants few. He cannot hope to live by writing poetry: that he will discover very quickly. A few, but they are very few, buy new books of poetry. One publisher, for instance, greatly to his credit, has recently made an attempt, in which he has partly succeeded, to revive the taste for poetry. He is credited with the power of generally getting through the whole of a small edition. This is something. Twenty years ago it would have been impossible. Some curiosity about new poetry has been awakened; one can only wish him greater success. Yet—what is it? A new

poet steps forward. Out of the whole of the English-speaking race—a hundred-and-twenty millions in all—there are found, perhaps, 500—actually 500! who care enough about poetry to buy a new book of verse. It is one in a quarter-of-a-million.

What can the young poet do for a livelihood? For one thing, he may write verses for the magazines. Most magazines contain one or more copies of verse in every number. But there is the competition to consider. The young poet will find it as hard to get his verses accepted as if he were a young novelist. Even when they are accepted he will still find it difficult to live upon the proceeds.

Can one, then, advise the young Poet for his good? He is born, as we all acknowledge, not made. Can he however, assist in the development and the perfection of himself?

All the general rules that have been laid down apply to Poetry as well as to every other form of the literary life.

It is necessary for him, even more than for others, to cultivate himself; to learn what he can and all he can, in everything that belongs to culture. Even more than the critic, he must observe and cultivate the power of observation. He must learn to exercise and develop his senses; a town-bred youth, for instance, starts heavily handicapped: he has no eyes for the things of Nature: his eyes are too slow to catch the flight

of a bird: they are too dull to perceive the beauty and the infinite variety of colour and of light: he does not understand the fields and the woods: the moods of the sky: the aspect of the river; the song of the birds, and the names and seasons of the flowers. All these things the young poet should cultivate and learn. Think how large a part nature fills in Poetry.

He must learn, as well, the ways of men; the history of civilisation; the rise in advance of mankind.

No knowledge that concerns humanity is useless to the Poet. There is, in addition, the study of his own craft. Poets are not greatly given to revealing the secrets of the study. It is the fashion of the world to suppose that poets sing because they must; without training, without study; without practice. The contrary is, of course, the case. The study of metres; the choice of metres; the functions, powers, and limitations of metres; require long and careful study and patience; the mastery of metres requires long practice and serious practice. It is not by happy chance that a Tennyson finds the metre of *In Memoriam* lying ready to his hand. The study of English poetry involves the study of a great many metres, all of them beautiful and effective in practised hands; a young man cannot do better than practice these metres and learn what each is best fitted for and for what it should be chosen. None of our English metres ever

die: the heroic verse of Pope came to be considered a mere trick because it seemed that anybody could learn it; that was not, however, true; it was easily learned by many; it ceased to give the delight that largely consists of surprise; yet it has never died; there are forms of poetry which are better expressed in the heroic metre than in any other. In the same way the metre of Gray's *Elegy* is peculiarly appropriate to the verse of meditation, repose, or regret. The music of Swinburne so far remains his own; he has had imitators, but none that have reached the music and the rhythm of the original. Let the young writer of verse read all; learn all; try all; practice all. He will not, perhaps, succeed in spite of his most strenuous efforts. Not one in a thousand does succeed. To be received by the world as a great poet is to sound the deepest depths in the heart of man—who shall dare to hope for this greatness? But it is more glorious, sometimes, to fail in a grand effort than to succeed in a small effort. Now below the first rank there is no real success in verse. The world speaks of its minor poets, but when it loves a poet and learns his poetry and lingers over his lines and repeats them, making them proverbs, rules for the conduct of life, words of consolation and of hope, then that poet steps into the first rank. Of course, the success of an hour does not count. No poet can be said to be loved by the world till he has been loved unto the third and fourth generation.

Poetry must, therefore, be pursued for its own sake, for its one prize, though so stupendous, is very, very seldom attained. At best, for a long time, neglect ; at best, a small following, slowly growing greater ; rewards the poet. Tennyson is nearly fifty before he is recognised by the whole Anglo-Saxon speaking races : Browning is sixty before the world agrees to recognise him. It is a life of constant, patient effort to arrive at the Higher Thought, and to translate it into intelligible, musical, attractive verse ; the poet must be content to see lower natures applauded and followed while he himself is neglected—do you think it was pleasant for Browning to mark the wide popularity of Eliza Cook and Martin Tupper ?—he must be content to find his *clientèle* of readers slowly, very slowly, growing, and himself held in no respect except by the few.

It is a common reproach against literary men of all kinds that they take themselves too seriously. In the case of poets, there is nothing to prevent their doing so, but rather every encouragement. No poet can judge coldly of his own work ; he must needs love it ; he sees, if he reads it, not the actual words and lines, but the thoughts that fired his brain when he wrote ; the great thoughts which he strove to fix in verse, and hoped to make them intelligible and permanent. He sees, in fact, himself in his verse, as no other writer ever does see him-

self. If his following is minute, so, he may acknowledge for solace, was that of Browning; so, at first, was that of Keats; so, at first, was that of Wordsworth. All the great poets have begun with a small audience. This is a consolation to many who will yet always remain small poets. If the critics deride, have they not derided Keats and Byron, and Tennyson and Wordsworth? Therefore, the poet, successful or neglected, may live in a luminous haze of imaginary glory, and he may die, as he has lived, taking himself seriously.

There is no other occupation which more effectually engrosses and absorbs the worker; there is none more arduous or more delightful; none which lifts one more completely out of the region of practical life than the composition of poetry. If one fails—without knowing it; if one succeeds—only in imagination; it is of all pursuits the most enviable. Therefore, let us encourage the young poet to go on with his studies even if they lead him no higher than the page of a monthly magazine, and no farther than the publication (at his own expense) of a flimsy little volume. For his comfort it will be a very pretty little volume; artistically got up, bound in white with letters of gold, and limited to an edition of two hundred and fifty copies, as if there were only so many people in the world worthy to receive it. How, meantime, can the poet live? Mostly, he lives by journalism of

some kind or the other. Sometimes he hangs about a publisher's place and picks up some of the work that is going. If he is wise he goes on in the work by which his parents hoped to see him live, and thrive, and rise even to the making of money. But by poetry he cannot live.

II. The Novelist.

I HAVE to remind my readers that this book is intended to serve as a guide, specially to the young and inexperienced.

I must therefore begin the chapter by calling preliminary attention to certain points connected with the Art of Fiction, and I shall quote passages from a lecture delivered by myself, twelve years ago, on this subject.

It is then, first and before all, a real Art. It is the oldest, because it was known and practised long before Painting and her sisters were in existence or even thought of; it is older than any of the Muses from whose company she who tells stories has hitherto been excluded; it is the most widely spread, because in no race of men under the sun is it unknown, even though the stories may be always the same, and handed down from generation to generation in the same form; it is the most religious of all the Arts, because in every age until the present the lives, exploits and sufferings of gods, goddesses, saints and heroes have been the favourite theme; it

has always been the most popular, because it requires neither culture, education, nor natural genius to understand and listen to a story ; it is the most moral, because the world has always been taught whatever little morality it possesses by way of story, fable, apologue, parable, and allegory. It commands the widest influence, because it can be carried easily and everywhere, into regions where pictures are never seen and music is never heard ; it is the greatest teaching power, because its lessons are most readily apprehended and understood. All this, which might have been said thousands of years ago, may be said to-day with even greater force and truth. That world which exists not, but is an invention or an imitation—that world in which the shadows and shapes of men move about before our eyes as real as if they were actually living and speaking among us, is like a great theatre accessible to all of every sort, on whose stage are enacted, at our own sweet will, whenever we please to command them, the most beautiful plays : it is, as every theatre should be, the school in which manners are learned : here the majority of reading mankind learn nearly all that they know of life and manners, of philosophy and art ; even of science and religion. The modern novel converts abstract ideas into living models ; it gives ideas, it strengthens faith, it preaches a higher morality than is seen in the actual world ; it commands

the emotions of pity, admiration, and terror; it creates and keeps alive the sense of sympathy; it is the universal teacher; it is the only book which the great mass of reading mankind ever do read; it is the only way in which people can learn what other men and women are like; it redeems their lives from dulness, puts thoughts, desires, knowledge, and even ambitions into their hearts: it teaches them to talk, and enriches their speech with epigrams, anecdotes and illustrations. It is an unfailing source of delight to millions, happily not too critical. Why, out of all the books taken down from the shelves of the public libraries, four-fifths are novels, and of all those that are bought nine-tenths are novels. Compared with this tremendous engine of popular influence, what are all the other Arts put together? Can we not alter the old maxim, and say with truth, Let him who pleases make the laws if I may write the novels?

As for the field with which this Art of Fiction occupies itself, it is, if you please, nothing less than the whole of Humanity. The novelist studies men and women; he is concerned with their actions and their thoughts, their errors and their follies, their greatness and their meanness; the countless forms of beauty and constantly varying moods to be seen among them; the forces which act upon them; the passions, prejudices, hopes and fears which pull them this way

and that. He has to do, above all, and before all, with men and women. No one, for instance, among novelists, can be called a landscape painter, or a painter of sea-pieces, or a painter of fruit and flowers, save only in strict subordination to the group of characters with whom he is dealing. Landscape, sea, sky, and air, are merely accessories introduced in order to set off and bring into greater prominence the figures on the stage. The very first rule in Fiction is that the human interest must absolutely absorb everything else.

It is, therefore, the especial characteristic of this Art, that, since it deals exclusively with men and women, it not only requires of its followers, but also creates in readers, that sentiment which is destined to be a most mighty engine in deepening and widening the civilization of the world. We call it Sympathy, but it means a great deal more than was formerly understood by the word. It means, in fact, what Professor Seeley once called the Enthusiasm of Humanity, and it first appeared, I think, about a hundred-and-fifty years ago, when the modern novel came into existence. You will find it, for instance, conspicuous for its absence in Defoe. The modern Sympathy includes not only the power to pity the sufferings of others, but also that of understanding their very souls; it is the reverence for man, the respect for his personality, the recognition of his individuality,

and the enormous value of the one man, the perception of one man's relation to another, his duties and responsibilities. Through the strength of this newly-born faculty, and aided by the guidance of a great artist, we are enabled to discern the real indestructible man beneath the rags and filth of a common castaway, and the possibilities of the meanest gutter child that steals in the streets for its daily bread. Surely that is a wonderful Art which endows the people —all the people—with this power of vision and of feeling. Painting has not done it, and could never do it ; Painting has done more for nature than for humanity. Sculpture could not do it, because it deals with situation and form, rather than action. Music cannot do it, because Music (if I understand rightly) appeals especially to the individual concerning himself and his own aspirations. Poetry alone is the rival of Fiction, and in this respect it takes a lower place, not because Poetry fails to teach and interpret, but because Fiction is, and must always be, more popular.

Again, this Art teaches, like the others, by suppression and reticence. Out of the great procession of Humanity, the *Comédie Humaine* which the novelist sees passing ever before his eyes, single figures detach themselves one after the other, to be questioned, examined, and received or rejected. This process goes on perpetually. Humanity is so vast a field, that to

one who goes about watching men and women, and does not sit at home and evolve figures out of inner consciousness, there is not and can never be any end or limit to the freshness and interest of these figures. It is the work of the artist to select the figures, to suppress, to copy, to group, and to work up the incidents which each one offers. The daily life of the world is not dramatic—it is monotonous; the novelist makes it dramatic by his silences, his suppressions, and his exaggerations. No one, for example, in fiction behaves quite in the same way as in real life; as on the stage, if an actor unfolds and reads a letter, the simple action is done with an exaggeration of gesture which calls attention to the thing and to its importance, so in romance, while nothing should be allowed which does not carry on the story, so everything as it occurs must be accentuated and yet deprived of needless accessory details. The gestures of the characters at an important juncture, their looks, their voices, may all be noted if they help to impress the situation. Even the weather, the wind and the rain, with some writers, have been made to emphasize a mood or a passion of a heroine. To know how to use these aids artistically is to the novelist exactly what to the actor is the right presentation of a letter, the handing of a chair, even the removal of a glove.

A third characteristic of Fiction, which should

alone be sufficient to give it a place among the noblest forms of Art, is that, like Poetry, Painting, and Music, it becomes a vehicle, not only for the best thoughts of the writer, but also for those of the reader, so that a novelist may write truthfully and faithfully, but simply, and yet be understood in a far fuller and nobler sense than was present to his own mind. This power is the very highest gift of the poet. He has a vision and sees a thing clearly, yet perhaps afar off; another who reads him is enabled to get the same vision, to see the same thing, yet closer and more distinctly. For a lower intellect thus to lead and instruct a higher is surely a very great gift, and granted only to the highest forms of Art. And this it is which Fiction of the best kind does for its readers. It is, however, only another way of saying that Truth in Fiction produces effects similar to those produced by Truth in every other Art.

We come next to speak of the Laws which govern this Art. I mean those general rules and principles which must necessarily be acquired by every writer of Fiction before he can even hope for success. Rules will not make a man a novelist, any more than a knowledge of grammar makes a man know a language, or a knowledge of musical science makes a man able to play an instrument. Yet the rules must be learned. And, in speaking of them, one is compelled, so close is the connection between the

sister Arts, to use not only the same terms, but also to adopt the same rules, as those laid down by painters for their students. If these Laws appear self-evident, it is a proof that the general principles of the Art are well understood. Considering, however, the vast quantity of bad, inartistic work which is every week laid before the public, one is inclined to think that a statement of these principles may not be without usefulness.

First, and before everything else, there is the rule that everything in Fiction which is invented and is not the result of personal experience and observation is worthless. In some other Arts, the design may follow any lines which the designer pleases : it may be fanciful, unreal, or grotesque ; but in modern Fiction, whose sole end, aim, and purpose is to portray humanity and human character, the design must be in accordance with the customs and general practice of living men and women under any proposed set of circumstances and conditions. That is to say, the characters must be real, and such as might be met with in actual life, or, at least, the natural developments of such people as any of us might meet ; their actions must be natural and consistent ; the conditions of place, of manners, and of thought must be drawn from personal observation.

This being so, the first thing which has to be acquired is the art of description. It seems

easy to describe ; anyone, it seems, can set down what he sees. But consider. How much does he see ? There is everywhere, even in a room, such a quantity of things to be seen : far, far more in field and hedge, in mountain and in forest and beside the stream, are there countless things to be seen ; the unpractised eye sees nothing, or next to nothing. Here is a tree, here is a flower, there is sunshine lying on the hill. But to the observant and trained eye, the intelligent eye, there lies before him everywhere an inexhaustible and bewildering mass of things to see. Remember how Jefferies sits down in a coppice with his eyes wide open to see what the rest of us never dreamed of looking for. Long before he has half finished telling us what he has seen—behold ! a volume, and one of the most delightful volumes conceivable. But, then, Jefferies is a profound naturalist. We cannot all describe after his manner ; nor should we try, for the simple reason that descriptions of still life in a novel must be strictly subordinated to the human interest. But while Jefferies has his hedge and ditch and brook, we have our towns, our villages, and our assemblies of men and women. Among them we must not only observe, but we must select. Here, then, are two distinct faculties which the intending novelist must acquire ; viz., observation and selection.

What is next required, then, is the power of

Selection. Can this be taught? I think not, at least I do not know how, unless it is by reading. In every Art, selection requires that kind of special fitness for the Art which is included in the much abused word Genius. In Fiction, the power of selection requires a large share of the dramatic sense. Those who already possess this faculty will not go wrong if they bear in mind the simple rule that nothing should be admitted which does not advance the story, illustrate the characters, bring into stronger relief the hidden forces which act upon them, their emotions, their passions, and their intentions. All descriptions which hinder instead of helping the action, all episodes of whatever kind, all conversation which does not either advance the story or illustrate the characters, ought to be rigidly suppressed.

Closely connected with selection is dramatic presentation. Given a situation, it should be the first care of the writer to present it as dramatically, that is to say as forcibly, as possible. The grouping and setting of the picture, the due subordination of description to dialogue, the rapidity of the action, those things which naturally suggest themselves to the practised eye, deserve to be very carefully considered by the beginner. In fact, a novel is like a play: it may be divided into scenes and acts, tableaux and situations, separated by the end of the chapter instead of the drop scene: the writer is the dramatist, stage-manager, scene-painter,

actor, and carpenter, all in one: it is his single business to see that none of the scenes flag or fall flat: he must never for one moment forget to consider how the piece is looking from the front.

The next simple Rule is that the drawing of each figure must be clear in outline, and, even if only sketched, must be sketched without hesitation. This can only be done when the writer himself sees his figures clearly. Characters in fiction do not, it must be understood, spring Minerva-like from the brain. They grow: they grow sometimes slowly, sometimes quickly. From the first moment of conception, that is to say, from the first moment of their being seen and caught, they grow continuously and almost without mental effort. If they do not grow and become every day clearer, they had better be put aside at once, and forgotten as soon as may be, because that is a proof that the author does not understand the character he has himself endeavoured to create.

As for the methods of conveying a clear understanding of a character, they are many. The first and the easiest is to make it clear by reason of some mannerism or personal peculiarity, some trick of speech or of carriage. This is the worst, as may generally be said of the easiest way. Another easy method is to describe your character at length. This also is a bad, because a tedious, method. If, however,

you read a page or two of any good writer, you will discover that he first makes a character intelligible by a few words, and then allows him to reveal himself in action and dialogue. On the other hand, nothing is more inartistic than to be constantly calling attention in a dialogue to a gesture or a look, to laughter or to tears. The situation generally requires no such explanation : in some well-known scenes which I could quote, there is not a single word to emphasize or explain the attitude, manner, and look of the speakers, yet they are as intelligible as if they were written down and described. That is the highest art which carries the reader along and makes him see, without being told, the changing expressions, the gestures of the speakers, and hear the varying tones of their voices. It is as if one should close one's eyes at the theatre, and yet continue to see the actors on the stage as well as hear their voices. The only writer who can do this is he who makes his characters intelligible from the very outset, causes them first to stand before the reader in clear outline, and then with every additional line brings out the figure, fills up the face, and makes his creatures grow from the simple outline more and more to the perfect and rounded figure.

Clearness of drawing, which includes clearness of vision, also assists in producing directness of purpose. As soon as the actors in the

story become real in the mind of the narrator, and not before, the story itself becomes real to him. More than this, he becomes straightway vehemently impelled to tell it, and he is moved to tell it in the best and most direct way, the most dramatic way, the most truthful way possible to him. It is, in fact, only when the writer believes his own story, and knows it to be every word true, and feels that he has somehow learned from everyone concerned the secret history of his own part in it, that he can really begin to write it.* We know how sometimes, even from a practised hand, there comes a work marred with the fatal defect that the writer does not believe in his own story. When this is the case, one may generally find on investigation that one cause at least of the failure is that the characters, or some of them, are blurred and uncertain.

Again, the modern English novel, whatever form it takes, almost always starts with a conscious moral purpose. When it does not, so

* Hardly anything is more important than this—to believe in your own story. Wherefore let the student remember that unless the characters exist and move about in his brain, all separate, distinct, living, and perpetually engaged in the action of the story, sometimes at one part of it, sometimes at another, and that in scenes and places which must be omitted in the writing, he has got no story to tell and had better give it up. I do not think it is generally understood that there are thousands of scenes which belong to the story and never get outside the writer's brain at all. Some of these may be very beautiful and touching; but there is not room for all, and the writer has to select.

much are we accustomed to expect it, that one feels as if there has been a debasement of the Art. It has, unhappily, become possible in this country for a writer to defile and defame humanity and still be called an artist. But the development of modern sympathy, the growing reverence for the individual, the ever-widening love of things beautiful and the appreciation of lives made beautiful by devotion and self-denial, the sense of personal responsibility among the English-speaking races, the deep-seated religion of our people, even in a time of doubt, are all forces which act strongly upon the artist as well as upon his readers, and lend to his work, whether he will or not, a moral purpose so clearly marked that it has become almost a law of English Fiction. We must acknowledge that this is a truly admirable thing, and a great cause for congratulation. At the same time, one may be permitted to think that the preaching novel is the least desirable of any, and to be unfeignedly rejoiced that the old religious novel, written in the interests of High Church or Low Church or any other Church, has gone out of fashion.

Next, just as in Painting and Sculpture, not only are fidelity, truth, and harmony to be observed in Fiction, but also beauty of workmanship. It is almost impossible to estimate too highly the value of careful workmanship, that is, of style. Every one, without exception, of the great Masters in Fiction, has recognised this

truth. You will hardly find a single page in any of them which is not carefully and even elaborately worked up. I think there is no point on which critics of novels should place greater importance than this, because it is one which young novelists are so very liable to ignore. There ought not to be in a novel, any more than in a poem, a single sentence carelessly worded, a single phrase which has not been considered. Consider, if you please, any one of the great scenes in Fiction—how much of the effect is due to the style, the balanced sentences, the very words used by the narrator! This, however, is only one more point of similarity between Fiction and the sister Arts. There is, I know, the danger of attaching too much attention to style at the expense of situation, and so falling a prey to priggishness, fashions, and mannerisms of the day. It is certainly a danger; at the same time, it sometimes seems, when one reads the slipshod, careless English which is often thought good enough for story-telling, that it is almost impossible to overrate the value of style. There is comfort in the thought that no reputation worth having can be made without attending to style, and that there is no style, however rugged, which cannot be made beautiful by attention and pains. "How many times," a writer once asked a girl who brought him her first effort for advice and criticism—"how many times have you re-written this page?" She confessed that she had written

it once for all, had never read it afterwards, and had not the least idea that there was such a thing as style. Is it not presumptuous in the highest degree to believe that what one has produced without pains, thought, or trouble will give any pleasure to the reader?

In fact, every scene, however unimportant, should be completely and carefully finished. There should be no unfinished places, no sign anywhere of weariness or haste—in fact, no scamping. The writer must so love his work as to dwell tenderly on every line and be literally unable to send forth a single page of it without the finishing touches. We all of us remember that kind of novel in which every scene has the appearance of being hurried and scamped.

To sum up these few preliminary and general laws. The Art of Fiction requires first of all the power of description, truth and fidelity, observation, selection, clearness of conception and of outline, dramatic grouping, directness of purpose, a profound belief on the part of the story-teller in the reality of his story, and beauty of workmanship. It is, moreover, an Art which requires of those who follow it seriously that they must be unceasingly occupied in studying the ways of mankind, the social laws, the religions, philosophies, tendencies, thoughts, prejudices, superstitions of men and women. They must consider as many of the forces which act upon classes and upon individuals as they can dis-

cover; they should be always trying to put themselves into the place of another; they must be as inquisitive and as watchful as a detective, as suspicious as a criminal lawyer, as eager for knowledge as a physicist, and withal fully possessed of that spirit to which nothing appears mean, nothing contemptible, nothing unworthy of study, which belongs to human nature.

After all these preliminary studies there comes the most important point of all — the story. There is a school which pretends that there is no need for a story: all the stories, they say, have been told already; there is no more room for invention: nobody wants any longer to listen to a story. One hears this kind of talk with the same wonder which one feels when a new monstrous fashion changes the beautiful figure of woman into something grotesque and unnatural. Men say these things gravely to each other, especially men who have no story to tell: other men listen gravely; in the same way women put on the newest and most preposterous fashions gravely, and look upon each other without either laughing or hiding their faces for shame. It is, indeed, if we think of it, a most strange and wonderful theory, that we should continue to care for Fiction and cease to care for the story. We have all along been training ourselves how to tell the story, and here is this new school which steps in like the needy knife-grinder, to explain that there is no story left at all to tell.

Why, the story is everything. I cannot conceive of a world going on at all without stories, and those strong ones, with incident in them, and merriment and pathos, laughter and tears, and the excitement of wondering what will happen next. Fortunately, these new theorists contradict themselves, because they find it impossible to write a novel which shall not contain a story, although it may be but a puny bantling. Fiction without adventure—a drama without a plot—a novel without surprises—the thing is as impossible as life without uncertainty.

As for the story, then. And here theory and teaching can go no farther. For every Art there is the corresponding science which may be taught. We have been speaking of the corresponding science. But the Art itself can neither be taught nor communicated. If the thing is in a man he will bring it out somehow, well or badly, quickly or slowly. If it is not, he can never learn it. Here, then, let us suppose that we have to do with the man to whom the invention of stories is part of his nature. We will also suppose that he has mastered the laws of his Art, and is now anxious to apply them. To such a man one can only recommend that he should with the greatest care and attention analyze and examine the construction of certain works, which are acknowledged to be of the first rank in fiction.

I invite the young novelist to consider these

observations and to apply them to any work of Fiction that he pleases.

I next proceed to lay down certain rules.

(i). The necessity of daily practice.

Let me repeat the advice already given (p. 48), as to acquiring the mastery over the pen and of writing something every day: something definite: a dialogue on a given subject: an essay on a given subject: the description of a piece of country: a portrait: something that will restrain the pen; prevent the style from becoming slipshod; and will make the presentation of narrative or argument direct and straightforward.

(ii). Let me also urge once more the necessity of acquiring and cultivating the power of observation.

(iii). As regards reading. It is, of course, necessary to read the masters in fiction. As has already been stated, it is part of the equipment of a young novelist that he must be familiar with these great works. But I would not advise him to saturate his mind with contemporary fiction. He must think of cultivating his own style rather than of imitating or criticizing or avoiding other writers. And he must not be hampered with the feeling that this or that story is an old one, already used, an objection quite likely to occur to one who reads a great many novels. According to some, as we know, all the stories are old: all have been told a thousand

times. The story of Cinderella, for instance, belongs to hundreds of tribes and nations. According to others, the number of stories is as infinite as are the variations of the human face and the changes of the human heart.

(iv). But novels should be read in moderation or for the purpose of analysis. And the use of analysis is to find out how the story is worked out—how it is planned : and how it is told. For instance, I shall not, I hope, be charged with vainglory if I suggest one of my own, say the novel called "Beyond the Dreams of Avarice."

In this history there is presented the picture of a family widely scattered, the members of which do not know each other. One of them dies apparently intestate, leaving an immense fortune. There is, of course, an immediate rush of claimants. Unless the claim can be successfully proved, the money will go to the Crown. Claimants come from New Zealand, from America, from all parts. There is, however, a grandson who can, if he chooses, assert his claim and take the whole. How the search into old family history reveals long hidden skeletons, and brings to light forgotten scandals, and brings together people of widely different social positions, and how the constant temptation to reveal himself acts upon the character of the true heir to the illgotten millions, is the theme of the story.

How should the student proceed to analyse this, or any other, story ?

(i). He should read it through uncritically. If possible, he should himself be quite carried away by the story. Is it not a proof that one possesses an imagination if he can be carried away by a story?

(ii). He should then read it again, this time critically.

(iii). He may next take pen and paper, and write down the leading idea of the story: the way in which this idea has been set, so to speak, among a group of characters and in a place where it seems naturally enshrined. He should examine, in turn, the part played by every one of the characters. If any one character has played no part at all in the conduct of the fable, he has no business in the book. He may consider also how the story is "mounted," so to speak; with what scenery and surroundings, and how these help out the story. In other words, he might pull the story to pieces and then reconstruct it himself.

It is so important that the dialogue should be clear: should advance the story: should be bright, that the young writer must practise much and often the art of writing dialogue. A very good method is to make little plays; by so doing he will not only learn to make his fiction dramatic, but he will also be teaching himself the art of writing plays.

(iv.) He must cultivate his own mind by every means in his power. This also is repeti-

tion (see p. 46). The novelist, like the poet, reveals himself: he lays bare his mind: he shows what is in him: he exposes his weaknesses. The aspirant must learn, therefore, all he can: not only of literature: but something about art: something about music: something about the drama. Let him remember that whatever he learns, whatever he knows, will add its contribution to his page, and will enrich his work and make it full and strong.

(v.) He should read French novels for the construction, and for the clearness and neatness of style which characterize the best French work.

(vi.) I am supposing that he is serious in his aims, and that he knows perfectly well that his ambition deserves the most patient work: the most determined courage. He may be engaged in something else all day—say in a merchant's office. Then let him give his spare time, his evenings, his early mornings, to preparation for this work.

(vii.) I suppose that he has already made some progress, written some tentative stories or sketches. It is extremely important that at this point he should take advice. I strongly recommend him to send his work to the Society of Authors, 4, Portugal Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, where, for a small fee, he will get an opinion upon it from a competent adviser. This step may save him a great deal of trouble, and

may warn him of defects which he might unaided pass over.

(viii.) There is next the Golden Rule that belongs to literary as to all other work. Let him take trouble—take any amount of trouble. Let him give his best to everything that he sends out. Let him never think of husbanding his ideas. Let him never be afraid of drying up the source. In the case of imaginative work, the more generously he gives, the more amply will he receive. Only let him take trouble and let nothing go out but the very best that he can give. What did Carlyle say? "Give yourself royally."

(ix.) At the outset the young novelist is sometimes perplexed about the length. More often he is ignorant even of the necessity of considering the length. A fashion has grown up of late years, of estimating a novel, for serial purposes, by the number of words it contains. Some persons affect to see in this method a degradation of literature: they suppose that the author is paid literally by the number of words, and that he is tempted to stretch out his work in order to get more money, regardless of art. This is nonsense. The objection betrays entire ignorance of methods. For the writer is not paid slavishly by the number of words, but, which is very natural, by the space which the editor of a magazine can give him. Thus, the editor wants a story which will occupy so many pages: he naturally arranges

his articles by the page: formerly he considered them by the sheet. Dr. Johnson, for instance, and the men of his time, were paid by the sheet. Both page and sheet mean words: the connection between printed page or sheet and written page or sheet must therefore be established. Nothing is easier. The writer, I suppose, always uses one size of paper: he therefore knows exactly how many words go to his written page: he can thus arrange his work so as to suit his page. If, for instance, the editor wants ten pages, or ten columns, of a thousand words each, the writer arranges for ten thousand words. The author is exactly in the position of a painter who wishes to fill a canvas of a certain size. There is no degradation that I can see. Another example. The illustrated papers generally have a serial novel running for three months or six months. Each instalment, as a rule, covers a space represented by about six thousand words: the author is not called upon to furnish exactly six thousand words, but something like that amount—some hundreds over or under. The editor will certainly not count the words, but he will expect a certain amount of space, and the author knows how many words, *i.e.*, how many of his own pages, go to make up that space.

If a novel does not run first in serial form, but is published directly, the writer has a very much larger choice as to space. Nowadays, there is no difference made in price between a long novel and a short novel.

In this case, where there are no fetters imposed by serial publication, the writer has only to consider what people ask in a novel as to length. They like a story which will take them two or three evenings to read: this means a volume of about 300 or 320 pages in length, or, about twenty sheets of sixteen pages each; or 80,000 to 100,000 words if we follow the modern mode of reckoning length. The average one volume story is in length now more often the former than the latter.

Let us conclude this chapter with a note on the short story. The young writer will do well to attempt a reputation for himself by the writing of short stories. He will find no other reputation more useful or more abiding. No other kind of work is more in demand. Now, in order to write short stories, he must understand what a short story should be. To begin with, then, it must not be the long story abridged. It must not be the story of a life. It should be an episode in a life: it is not at all necessary to ring the wedding bells at the end: there need be no love in it: it should be brightly written: it should turn on one incident: it should reveal the characters with the least possible description by means of dialogue: it should present the setting of place or time with the fewest possible words. This most useful branch of the art may be best cultivated by writing dialogue and little dramas. The dialogue must be, above all things, bright:

for my own part I dislike dialogue stuffed with epigram, whether intended for the stage or for a magazine, simply because it is unnatural, and dialogue for either purpose ought to seem natural and unforced, even though, for either purpose, it must be more or less exaggerated. The very cleverest people never talk quite as the epigrammatists make them.

The student may read as a help and an illustration the short stories by Guy de Maupassant. I am unwilling in this work to mention living writers more than is necessary, but I cannot refrain from advising every young writer to read Anthony Hope's "Dolly Dialogues." He will never, probably, attain to the brightness and flow and melody of these dialogues, but they will show him what dialogues may be, and they will help to lift his work out of dulness into animation.

In speaking of the short story, I have in my mind mostly the short story of three or four columns for the weekly magazine or newspaper. The "Dolly Dialogues," I believe, all came out in the *Westminster Gazette*. If, however, a monthly magazine accepts a story complete in one part, a larger canvass is offered, and the story may run to twelve or fifteen thousand words. But let the fundamental difference between a novel and a short story always be remembered : that the former is a life—or the most important part of a life, while the latter

relates only an episode which may or may not have consequences of importance.

III. The Dramatist.

Sixty years ago, when Douglas Jerrold was writing plays for the London stage, there were very few theatres. Their performances were not attended by "serious" people, that is to say by the middle class: no piece had a long run: the dramatists were a small company: they were miserably paid: and it was extremely difficult for any outsider to get a piece on the stage. There has always been a strong attraction for minds of a certain cast towards the drama, but it cannot be said that there have ever been, until quite recently, the attraction of great prizes in the profession of playwright. Nothing is more true than that art of every kind languishes if the material encouragement is removed. In fiction, for instance, there have been great prizes occasionally, though there have been periods of depression. Therefore, fiction has flourished. In order, further, to attract the best minds to the practice of any art there must be offered not only a few great prizes but a large number of moderate prizes. When, for instance, in the Thirties, the circulating libraries all over the country collapsed and fell, with them fell the ordinary novel. The rank and file of novelists were ruined. Dickens, however, flourished: and so did Thackeray and

Lytton and Harrison Ainsworth, and one or two more: but the great mass of novelists perished, and for a long time there were few aspirants for the art of fiction.

So, for the stage, there has never been any kind of rush; because, until quite recently, the work was most uncertain, and even when a piece was accepted and successful it was poorly remunerated.

There is now, however, every indication that a great deal of the best part of English imaginative genius is returning to the stage. One observes, that in consequence of the great increase in the number of theatres, the demand for good plays is far greater than was ever before known. Not only in London but in all the great towns, theatres have increased in number and in popularity: the country theatres have abandoned their old sleepy ways and their stock companies which used to play to empty houses. I can testify from personal reminiscence to the fidelity of the description of the Portsmouth Theatre in "Nicholas Nickleby," when the company usually played to melancholy houses of a dozen spectators or so: they are now open to travelling companies playing the new and most popular pieces: a successful play is not only acted on the London stage: it is taken about the country: it is taken to the colonies: it is taken to America. The pecuniary position of the dramatist is thus enormously improved: it is a hundredfold improved.

From every performance; by every company; the author now receives his royalty or his fee: the owner and author of a successful play, thus performed all over the world, derives, from that play alone, a popularity far beyond anything possible to a dramatist like Douglas Jerrold: he also draws, which is another point, an income which is equal to, or greater than, that of a highly successful barrister or physician. But he can write, perhaps, more than one play in a year. His income may thus already surpass, and will, very soon, most certainly surpass, that possible in any of the "learned" professions. The successful dramatist of the future will be far more successful, if we think of income, than will be possible for the physician or the lawyer.

The increased demand for new plays, the great pecuniary value of the successful play, are two forces which are assuredly making for the improvement of the drama. Another force which is to me distinctly visible in the near future is the decay of the novel. At present the successful novelist's lines have fallen in a pleasant place: there is, however, an enormous competition always increasing: a new publisher starts every month: all publishers aim at getting successful novels: and they have entered upon a cut-throat competition with each other in the production of new novels. Last year (1897) there were published at one season of the year, three or four novels every day! Who can ex-

pect that the booksellers, whose trade is decaying, though the sale of books is increasing, will take all, or even a large proportion, of these new books? Who can expect that the public, dazzled with the multitude of novels offered them, will make any attempt to read them or even a small part of them? Who can expect that the reviewers, aghast at the mass of novels before them, will successfully select those which are important? There is a large reading public, growing always larger: but the public which will buy six shilling novels is not great, and grows slowly. I believe that 180,000 represents the highest figure yet reached for Great Britain and the Colonies for any one six shilling novel, while a sale of 5,000 is thought respectable. Therefore, only those novelists who have an established reputation have any reason to be satisfied with the substantial rewards of their work. The novelist of the future will be rich beyond the dreams of avarice, but he will belong to a very, very small company. If this is the case—and I am quite certain that it is—the result is quite sure: there will be so many disappointments that the profession of novelist will, slowly or rapidly, cease to attract: the present swarm of story-tellers, finding that their efforts produce neither fame nor gold, will disappear and die like the May flies of the river-side, and writers of imagination will turn with one accord to the more promising line of the theatre.

Again reminding the reader that this book is to be considered merely as an elementary introduction to the subject, I would call the attention of the young dramatist to two or three points which he should observe at the outset.

(i). Selection, which is highly necessary for the novel, is a point which must be even more jealously regarded for the stage. Nothing must be allowed to interfere with the action of the story; nothing that will draw attention from the principal characters. The subordinate plot, so long a part of the old drama, was only used as a foil to the real interest which it was supposed to set off.

(ii). The dialogue must be shorter and more to the point than in the novel. Some playwrights force the dialogue into artificial epigrams. This is simply bad art. An epigram must appear to rise naturally from the situation, and to be uttered quite as one would expect it by the character to whom it is given.

(iii). The types presented must be clear and unmistakable. The playgoer does not like constructing his character for himself: he does not desire to take them piecemeal from indications in the story, the situations, and the words: he likes to have them presented to him clearly: standing out distinct and visible. We have not yet arrived at presenting, successfully, a psychological puzzle to after-dinner stalls.

(iv). The story should be one which is fresh;

that is, as fresh as can be expected: and quite clear to the most stupid spectator. The most popular plays—may one say the best plays?—have always been those in which there has been the most perfect clearness of story, character, and dialogue.

(v). There must, as a rule, and unless the dramatist is contented to please one part of the audience only, be strength of situation. A play, unlike a novel, appeals to all classes of society at the same time: to the stalls, which are chiefly occupied by country people who come to the theatre after a good hotel dinner, with copious champagne: to the pit, the home of the *bourgeois* critic: to the dress circle, filled chiefly with ladies and their daughters: to the upper circle, for which the shop people get orders; and to the gallery, filled with—I know not. Nobody has yet explored the gallery and described its occupants.

In this respect the novel is quite different. The novelist, unconsciously perhaps, writes for a class. Principally he writes for the middle class to which he generally belongs: he writes for them because they are the largest class of readers, and because he knows their ideas, and their views of life. If he were writing for the classes below he would have to invent strong situations: this would be indispensable: the "penny novelettes" all aim at strong situations. In the middle classes he may, perhaps, find strong

situations—they like *tableaux*—or he may give them a story which is no story—perhaps they will take it: or talk, mere talk—perhaps they will accept that: or so-called "analysis" of character, which is too often dreary description of unattractive mental conditions—perhaps they will accept the "analysis." The point is that the novel appeals to one class, while at the theatre the play appeals, at one and the same time, to all classes. Imagine a novelist writing a book which shall please and amuse at the same time, the sporting man: the man of society: the undergraduate: the "smart" woman: the shop girl: the school girl: the city man: the work girl: the poet: the artist: the divine: all at once. That is what the dramatist has to do. All classes sit together in the theatre and all must be interested. Therefore, strength of situation is indispensable. It is possible to conceive of a theatre with no gallery, but there would still be stalls and pit, dress circle and upper circle.

(vi.) As regards subject and treatment, the young dramatist has a choice as wide as the whole world of humanity: if he essays tragedy, he has the whole of history from which to choose: if comedy, there is the whole comedy of man; if a play of manners, there is the city before him with all its men and women and all their passions, ambitions, attempts, and failures. There is no limit to his choice, except the limit imposed by the conditions of the stage, which will not allow

everything to be represented upon it. He may write farces, the making of which seems now almost a forgotten art—not long ago every performance began and ended with a farce. He may attempt tragedy, but he will find few managers daring enough to put a tragedy on the boards: he will begin with a *lever de rideau*, if he is wise, and so rise to comedy, serious or farcical. There are abundant signs that we are ready in comedy to depart from the old conventional grooves, and to represent men and women as they are. More than one attempt has lately been made in this direction. I need not mention names. It is a most healthy sign: if these playwrights succeed the drama will be once more lifted out of the mere conventional groove of amusement on familiar lines, and will become the medium of representing the world as it is, and humanity, not in a highly artificial form of fashionable society, but as it is, led and driven by forces which have never been presented on the stage since the Elizabethan drama. If the young playwright will only dare to be unconventional: if he will only go for inspiration into the real world in which he lives, too often unconscious and careless of what goes on around him, with its ten thousand comedies and tragedies, waiting for him, he may rise to great things.

The rush of young writers to the Stage has already begun. The number of living dramatists of repute, twenty years ago, could be counted on

the fingers of one hand. One would now require the fingers of four hands. In fifty years' time there will be as many dramatists as there are now novelists; that is to say, as many greatly successful: as many pretty successful: and as many trying in vain to get a hearing. In fifty years' time the English imagination will, perhaps, assume instinctively a dramatic form, as it now assumes the form of fiction: there will be two or three hundred theatres in London and its suburbs. Even now, a hundred would mean only one to every 50,000 souls, without counting the thousands of visitors. This is not an extravagant proportion when we consider that the play is becoming more and more the favourite form of amusement.

A certain French dramatist once confessed that he had a lot of puppets which he used in the construction of his plays, moving them about on a mimic stage, and placing them in groups and *tableaux*. This is a practice which may be strongly recommended to the young dramatist. It will teach him one or two important lessons. For instance, he will understand the necessity of action—continual action: of movement: of presenting new pictures continually: of the difficulty of getting his characters on and off the stage: it will prevent his dialogue becoming tedious and his plot too long.

Chapter V.

The Editor.

It is by many literary men believed that the most eligible and desirable post in the whole profession is that of Editor—whether of a daily paper, a weekly paper, or a monthly magazine. Not only do those writers who have long since abandoned all hope of success in literature yearn and pine for such a post, but even those who have succeeded so well that they are recognised as the leaders in their own line also desire, above all things, to be appointed editor, with an unalterable conviction that their's are the gifts which go to make the perfect editor. Dickens was an editor: Thackeray was an editor: Trollope was an editor: the names of half-a-dozen living literary men will occur as having been editors. Is there—has there been—one single good man of letters who has been a really successful editor? I think not. Most have been signal failures. For editorial ability is one thing and literary ability is another thing. So

that the fact of a man being distinguished in letters is not any reason why he should be distinguished as an Editor. Formerly it was thought that literary ability was the same thing as editorial ability. It is beginning to be understood that this is not by any means certain: for my own part I incline to the contrary belief, that distinguished literary gifts are precisely those which prevent a man from being a good editor. For, consider. A poet or a novelist is accustomed to rely wholly on himself: an editor must seek out those on whom he can rely. A poet or a novelist is one who holds opinions strongly, and by reason of his strong imagination, cannot understand the other side: an Editor must possess an equal mind. So that while a poet *may* make a good editor, I am of opinion that the probabilities are that he will not.

The chief attraction of the post is probably the sense of power which it conveys. The Editor of an important journal is not, as a rule, a recluse, and his social position is certainly advanced when he becomes an editor. But is it given to every one to become a successful editor? The difficulties of the work are certainly great, and the responsibilities are heavy.

Let us work out some of the conditions, the qualifications, and the difficulties attached to the position of editor. His very first and most obvious qualification is that he must be able to

stand outside the literary world as well as the political, the social, the artistic, the scientific, and the financial world. The writer—the literary man—is seldom able to stand outside: it is part of his temperament to become a partisan: he cherishes, more passionately than other men, his ideas, his prejudices, his convictions. It is with great difficulty that he avoids carrying these ideas and convictions into everything. Now, since the first duty of the editor is to advance his paper, he must begin by concealing himself: he should never suffer his own personal prejudices—though he calls them truths—to appear in his pages: he must remember that in order to please the public he must consider what they want and what they think, and how far his paper will be received as a school of thought and opinion. He must, therefore, study the wishes of his readers rather than the views of himself and his contributors. I have in my mind a conspicuous instance in which a man of remarkable ability caused one journal after another, whose destinies were entrusted to his keeping, to fail, because he always thought first of his own prejudices—which, as I said above, he mistook for truths—and his own contributors, who were his personal friends, and talked the jargon of his school. He allowed himself to be persuaded that it was his duty to impose these views upon the world. But the world did not want his views, and so he failed.

The editor must, therefore, be either free from prejudices and enthusiasms, or he must affect freedom: he must take no account of literary coteries, except as they interest his readers: he must keep any suspicion of the clique out of his paper: hundreds of papers, by the admission of the clique, have been ruined. He must, at the same time, be a man of broad and comprehensive views: he should understand something—no one can ever wholly understand it—of the direction and the force of the stream. To lead while you seem to follow: to guide when you seem to accompany: is the mark of the successful and the heaven-born editor.

He must also be quick to perceive when he has a good thing in his hands: he must be able to judge rapidly: he must be ready to take pains in advising the contributor of necessary changes. He must be always looking ahead, devising new subjects and arranging with popular writers. The old fashion of editing was to sit down and pick the best out of what might be offered. The magazine of ten years ago was too often a selection from the dust-heap. The new plan is to arrange all beforehand: to trust but little to the casual contributor: to invite contributions from known writers: and to select subjects, while an open door is always left open in case the casual contributor sends in something good and unexpected.

It must be acknowledged, therefore, that it

may be very difficult to find an editor who will meet all the requirements, and that it may be equally difficult to be that rare creature, the perfect editor. When one has been actually found and proved, when, under his management, the paper or the magazine really succeeds, he is worth anything in the shape of gratitude, honour, and salary, that the proprietor can bestow upon him. But the knowledge of his existence and his powers spreads quickly through Penmanland, and becomes known wherever journals are published, and editors are wanted.

If the fitness of the editor is of vital importance to the magazine, how much more important is it to the general interests of literature! Think what a power is wielded by the editor of such a journal as the *Nineteenth Century* or the *Contemporary* in the formation of opinion, which is the foundation of action. Think what an active, open-minded editor can do for any cause he takes up: how he may reform abuses: how he may remove causes of grievance: how he may set things in their right light: how he may stand manfully for principle: how, in the babble of multitudinous voices, he may choose a man who has a right to speak, and may set him in a pulpit and bid him speak while the world listens. This is a very great power, growing greater every day. The daily paper has its own authority, but the voice of the daily paper is apt to be heated by the daily controversy, and the opinions of the

daily paper have to be formed on the spur of the moment, while in a monthly magazine opinion is more deliberate : there has been time to look on all sides : and, perhaps, the writer chosen may be a statesman whom the world knows and is ready to trust.

There are, moreover, many dangers in the post of editor : a reputation may be made : but it may also be lost : when a man has ruined his journal, or is believed to have ruined it, he will certainly find it difficult to obtain the management of another. And the work of editor puts the man outside the ordinary grooves of writing and journalism : the old place is filled up : younger men come trampling in : the position of a man of fifty or forty who has failed as an editor and seeks work of the old kind is most unfortunate and almost hopeless. One who has been in command does not like to go back into the ranks. With all these considerations, it is, as I said above, truly remarkable that not only men who have failed yearn after the position of editor, but also men who have succeeded : men who cannot believe that their own position is really better than that of any editor : men who have gained all that a writer could desire in original work and yet hanker after the really subordinate and inferior position of an editor.

Fortunately, the gods do not grant men all their prayers.

Chapter VI.

In the Employment of a Publisher.

A great many persons carry on the Literary life in the employment of a publisher. Thus, to begin with, there are generally going on some great works; an Encyclopædia: a Dictionary of Classical Antiquities: of Art: of Music; of Science: of the Bible; of Geography; of Biography; all such works demand, first of all, a publisher with the command of a large capital; next, an editor of great judgment, and then a staff of scholars and specialists. There are also produced from time to time series scientific, literary, biographical, and otherwise, which also require the work of scholars and specialists. The writing of these works is generally an aid to the professor and the lecturer. Indeed, the amount of current literature projected by publishers and requiring the co-operation of specialists is very large. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* alone in each successive edition has offered a vast quantity of work to specialists; and with it

the honour of contributing to such an enterprise, and very considerable sums of money for the work. There are, next, houses where a great quantity of books, chiefly of the popular kind, are published, which engage writers to work for them either on salaries or by the "job." Some of these houses run a large number of cheap magazines and journals. Every one of these papers demands all the time and all the thought of one man, the editor. His qualifications have been already considered.

A post greatly desired by many is that of reader and adviser. It is a singular fact that in the literary world there are many persons professing to lead the Literary life, who actually dislike the work of writing. Some of these are dissatisfied with their own work; a greater number dislike the pains of travail and the labour of correction. These are the people who so ardently desire the post of editor, and if they cannot attain to it, wish to become what is next in importance in their minds—reader and adviser to a publisher. Qualifications very similar to those required by an editor are wanted for a reader. He is very difficult to obtain. It by no means follows that a good writer makes a good reader. Quite the contrary, in my opinion. The modern history of Literature is full of stories about the rejection of MSS., afterwards proved to be masterpieces, which were scornfully refused by one reader after another. The

repetition and the remembrance of such stories form the chief solace of the unsuccessful. They tell each other tales how this great man hawked his MS. about from house to house: and how another great man had his MS. returned after many days. Readers, in fact, are very fallible; but chiefly because they are not appointed and chosen with judgment. Even when a reader is the best procurable, he is more fallible than most "buyers" in other trades, and that by the very nature of the work. He is called upon to give an opinion of the work before him from a wholly commercial point of view. The publisher naturally wants to know of a MS. if it will sell: the reader, being generally a scholar with standards and ideals, considers the MS. before him from the literary as well as the commercial point of view. Of course he is anxious not to land his employer in a loss: on the other hand he is a literary man and he cannot choose but consider the literary side. There is no reason to doubt the perfect honesty of the reader: he means to give the soundest judgment possible from both points of view: too often, however, he fails to understand the commercial value of the MS. Too often he makes the same mistake as the bad editor: he imports into the business his own views of what literature ought to be: he makes the mistake of considering himself and his own prejudices, which, also like the bad editor, he calls "truths": he confuses his function

with that of the judge, and pronounces on the kind of literature that should be produced. Like the bad editor, this reader does not ask what the public wants, but what he himself wants ; and his taste is very seldom so wide as the taste of the public. Above all things, as should always be borne in mind by writer, reader, and critic, the public desire to be interested. Whatever the nature of the book—whether it is a sermon, or a poem, or a play, or an essay, or a story, they want to be "held" by the writer: they want to be "held" as with a vice, while the author speaks to them. Occasional faults of style or of taste they can forgive if they feel the grip of a strong hand. This is the great fact that the reader too often ignores. He is liable, by his own literary qualities — his own scholarship — his own fine taste, perhaps — to demand his own standards of style, and to be unduly hurt by what should be little pin prickings of bad style here and there. The reader, as much as the editor, should understand that the first, the second, the whole secret of popularity, is attractiveness. This attractiveness, or charm, a quality incapable of definition, is far more the characteristic of genius than the possession of a style in the very newest manner, or of taste, which may be perfect, and may also be cold and repellent. This charm is possessed alike by John Bunyan—an illiterate man ; by Addison — a

fine scholar: by Robert Burns, a peasant; by Cowper, a gentleman. You cannot define it, or analyse it, or even describe it. You can only recognise it. If a publisher gets hold of a MS. which really does possess this charm he has got hold of a good thing. If his reader fails to perceive the quality of charm on account of certain defects in the style he may be the most honest reader in the world, but he is incompetent. A reader, like an editor, must be ready to stand outside his own prejudices. In a word, a good reader is an invaluable person, like a good editor: an incompetent reader may be a most mischievous person, like a bad editor. And just as very few possess the qualifications that form a good editor, so the qualifications which form a good reader are equally rare and exceptional. Above all, his most valuable qualification is the power of understanding and distinguishing the points in a work which may make it popular. To repeat, he is not called upon to teach the public, but to recognise the public.

The position of reader or adviser is in some publishers' houses united with that of editor. This arrangement appears economical: it is, on the other hand, most mischievous. The duties of one differ widely from those of the other; the editor should have his whole time free for his magazine: the work of reading MSS. and advising upon them is hard and wearing, particu-

larly when, as often happens, a MS. seems to lie on the border-line of success. As a general rule readers are engaged and paid by a separate fee, sometimes very small, for every MS. entrusted to them for an opinion. In some houses, however, there are readers or advisers retained at a fixed salary, like an editor.

Where there is an education branch, an adviser should know what books are used in the various schools, and what chance there is of a new venture in any line: also what influence an educational writer can command; what books have been so long before the public that their life may be considered nearly finished. An educational book is not allowed to live more than a certain number of years. This kind of adviser is, in fact, a specialist.

It is well known, again, that many publishers have issued series of books—such as Men of Action; Men of Adventure; Men of Letters, etc., some of which have been successful. It is the part of a publisher's adviser to keep himself acquainted not only with what is published by other houses, but with the success achieved, and the subjects suggested by success or failure. An adviser hits upon a series likely to attract the public and suggests it to a publisher. His invention is adopted and carried out; the firm, however, by which the adviser's services have been retained for a small salary, take care that he shall never be allowed to learn what his in-

vention has produced. This seems a hardship, but it is a rule in every kind of business that a paid servant has no right to share in profits, and that he has no right to ask what those profits have been.

Of late years, many publishers have made it a rule, whether they employ readers or not, never to accept a MS. finally until they have themselves read it. The old-fashioned illiterate publisher is now nearly extinct; most of the new kind are as well educated as other people and, in many cases, are University men and scholars. This change should be advantageous to the best interests of literature: it should lead to the determination of the leaders to lift the business of publishing out of the old bad grooves of trading on the ignorance of the author. It has not yet done so. Still, we may be allowed to hope. Meantime, the publisher's reader has his opinions supplemented and examined by the publisher himself: he has become, in fact, the mere "taster." One consequence of this change is satisfactory: fewer mistakes will be made; the man whose actual livelihood depends upon the correctness of his judgment quickly develops and sharpens that judgment. A man, he will understand, cannot make a fortune out of his business unless he considers his customers before himself. The reader, therefore, must remember the kind of work that is expected by him should he obtain employment for a publisher's house. It stands to

reason that he will also be expected to observe a certain loyalty towards this house, and to speak well of it, and to recommend it. The official recommendation of his employers because he takes their money and eats their bread, may be sometimes, if he gets behind the scenes, a bitter pill to swallow. Not always, however. And recent experience has proved that there are writers base enough to approve of deceptions practised on other writers.

To work for a publisher as reader and adviser, or as editor, is an occupation as honourable and as laudable as any other. Such a man must not be called a publisher's hack. The poor wretch of the last century who was always employed in compiling books ; in plundering and blundering ; who could work you up a voyage to New Guinea, neat, workmanlike, and full of adventures, never having been beyond Greenwich, or a new translation from the Chinese, knowing nothing of the language, was, if you please, a publisher's hack. He, however, is an almost extinct animal. The last of the noble company of bookmakers died some ten years ago. Yet there is a publisher's hack still existing, though he no longer makes bad and sham books ; he has an office—or part of one—and a salary, though a small one. His business is to put books through the press ; to look after the illustrations ; to cut out from the press notices "bits" that may be quoted in advertisements : to write the preface or the in-

troduction ; to prepare the index ; there is plenty for him to do. But, it must be confessed, the occupation is hardly elevating ; it is little above menial work ; it is poorly paid : it leads to nothing : the position, the work, the pay, and the chances of a publisher's employé are no better than those of a clerk in a merchant's office, and, in most cases, of a clerk in the house of a small merchant.

Why, indeed, should they be ?

Another kind of work for a publisher is that of "tout." There are persons in the literary world who are not ashamed to "tout" secretly for a publisher, and to be paid for every author whom they may introduce. One need not waste time in characterizing the nature of this employment. The fact that it is secret stamps it as degrading. It is not, however, believed that there are many men of letters engaged in this unworthy way of making money.

It is sometimes believed that there is a great deal of work to be done for publishers in what is called "Research" : that is, in hunting up information of various kinds. This kind of work, however, is more in demand by writers than by publishers. In the preparation of books of history or of biography there is a continual necessity to look up references ; to copy passages ; verify quotations ; and examine extracts. This work is mostly carried on in the British Museum, and by ladies. It is, however, pre-

carious, and there are already too many engaged upon it. Many beginners think that they may get translation work to do. Let them abandon that hope. There is very little translation work: of all the books published every year few indeed are translations. In some cases, when French novels have been published at a very low price the translator's pay has been wretched. I know of a case in which five pounds was paid for translating a whole volume. No one could possibly live by such work at such pay, even if it were continuous.

I have now gone through most of the work which may be had in connection with a publisher's office. I have omitted the artistic side because it cannot be contended that the artist belongs to the Literary life. And I have omitted as well the purely commercial side; that of the accountants, the travellers, the advertising, the buying of paper, the arrangements with printer and with bookbinder.

Therefore, a man or woman of letters may edit, may read, may advise, may see through the press, may recommend, suggest, or invent; may feel the pulse of the public; may do the drudgery of the press work; may conduct research, and may one way or another make a reasonably good living, and an honourable living, by this kind of work. But he must not become a "tout." No one with any self-respect will "tout" for a publisher. When all is told, such

work is not writing. It is surely better to feel that one actually belongs to the noble company of writers than to the less noble company of those who belong to the ranks of literature, but do not write. In the same way, attached to every army are the commissariat staff; the ambulance and the medical staff; the sutlers and the "service"; but it is always more honourable to fight in the ranks than it is to follow the army, even at the head of any other branch.

BOOK II.

Chapter I.—The Commercial Side.

It is sometimes pretended that it is degrading to consider money in connection with literary work. Many publishers feel so strongly on this subject that they are desirous to keep the author free from any such degradation, and to suffer themselves alone to be degraded. From one point of view the prejudice shews a sense of the sacredness of literature as something which should not be in the least mixed up with mercenary motives. Yet Milton did not disdain the few pounds which were given him for his *Paradise Lost*, while later on the example of Dryden, Pope, Steele, Johnson, Goldsmith, Fielding, Smollett and others, ought to have removed this prejudice long ago. It is now the pretence and sham of those to whom literary property is unattainable. I have already (p. 3) dwelt upon the necessity of separating the literary from the commercial value.

It is remarkable that the same prejudice has never been entertained with regard to any other form of intellectual effort or achievement. The painter, the sculptor, the designer, the architect, the actor, the scholar, the divine, the engineer, the inventor, the electrician, the chemist, the physicist, the musician, the composer, the singer, every kind of worker might blamelessly acquire by his work as much money as was attainable. Every kind of worker—except the author. He is degraded by the mere mention of money in connection with his work. All other professors are allowed to make as much money as they could, and are applauded for doing so. But not the professor of literature. Or, if we may consider literature as a trade and not a profession, every other trade may make, laudably, as much money as it can. But not literature.

Who are the people who talk this nonsense?

They are chiefly the unsuccessful writers. Not necessarily bad writers, but writers not popular. Their books may be very good, but they are not popular. Therefore these writers, in order to maintain their self-respect, pretend that they are above any consideration of money. Many writers of undoubted genius, they point out, with perfect truth, have not been popular. Since they also cannot make any money, it stands to reason, of course, that they themselves belong to the company of genius. This consoles. It does more: it elevates: it places

them on the heights where the unpopular Prophet despises money: it enables them to talk about the degradation of literature when it touches money. As for that question why literature may not do what all other professions are encouraged to do, there has never been any answer offered at all. Or, again, as to that question why Milton, Dryden, Pope, Johnson, Goldsmith, Fielding, Smollett, Wordsworth, Byron, Southey, Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, Tennyson, and the whole noble army have never felt any degradation in accepting as much money as they could get by their works, there is no answer forthcoming.

The only rational objection to writers making money by their work applies equally to artists and men of science and all who work with the brain. They may be tempted to work too fast and too much; to work with the view of making money without regard to their literary standards. That as has been well said, is the damnation of the cheque. It carries with it, indeed, a sure and certain damnation: it kills the writer. As for the mere compilation of books, it has now become an almost extinct profession; men write out of the fulness of their knowledge; books not of imagination or observation are written by specialists: the old-fashioned plunderer-blunderer has now become a very rare bird indeed.

Let us now proceed to consider what is meant by the commercial side of literature; in

other words, by literary property. How, then, do men and women of labour live?

(i). By writing for magazines and journals.

The monthly magazine of the better class pays as a rule a guinea a page: I have heard that this scale of pay has recently been reduced in one or two of them. Writers whose work is in demand obtain, of course, if the editor desires their names, very much higher terms. The page varies in length from five hundred to a thousand words. An article is generally from eight to twelve pages in length. It will, therefore, be paid for, probably, by a cheque of as many guineas. Unless a writer possesses very wide knowledge, or special knowledge, of a kind that is much in demand, he can hardly expect to live by writing for magazines.

Editors of magazines are continually offered critical literary papers. Now, the literary paper can be reeled off to order in quite workmanlike guise by any literary man of scholarship. Yet there are not a dozen living men who can produce a critical paper really worth reading; that is to say, presenting new and instructive views. But the average public cares next to nothing for these papers: it is even a sign of decay when a magazine cumbers its pages with them, because it shows that the editor is taking the easier and the cheaper line. The man who thinks to make his way with such papers will find that he is entering a small and decaying market filled with

competitors. If we turn to fiction, on the other hand, we find that all the magazines, except three or four, have a serial novel always running, and other short stories in every number. The payment for a serial to run for a year depends partly on the reputation of the writer and partly on the position of the magazine. If the writer is not a popular novelist, he will be offered from £50 to £200 for the English serial right. If he is a man of great name, he will, of course, command a very much higher price. Let him take care, however, lest he fall into the trap that will probably be laid for him, and part with all other rights at the same time for the same small sum.

The weekly periodicals, the penny papers, call aloud continually for stories—stories—stories—their scale of pay to writers is in most cases humble. Some of them, however, have an enormous circulation, and pay very well. The writer of a short story may be offered by one of these journals from a few shillings to three or four guineas for a story of three or four columns. A story-teller with a fairly wide connection among editors may take in this way from £50 to £150 a year. The pay is not grand; but then the work itself is not grand; a great many people can do it, and can attain the level of interest and of style which is wanted: the supply is always much greater than the demand. I would point out to young people in situations of any kind that it will be far better for them to go on with

their daily work contentedly: to give the evening or the early morning to their writing; and to supplement their salaries in this way rather than to exchange a certainty, however small, for the work of writing stories for penny weeklies. In the latter case the necessity of continually grinding out short stories is harassing and degrading: in the former the work of writing stories as they seem to "come"—they mostly have to be looked for—has about it a spontaneous air which adds to one's self-respect, while it may be, thus treated, the most delightful of all occupations.

Since literary criticism is in small demand; since poetry has but small commercial value; since it is the desire of all editors to fill their magazines with such papers as can only be written by specialists, or are occasional papers of adventure, travel, and general experiences; it follows that a writer cannot live by contributing to magazines, except in the way of fiction.

Let us consider next, fiction outside the magazines.

It will be best to put aside at once, as untrustworthy, most of what appears in certain papers as to the large fortunes made by the writing of fiction. Novelists do not, as a rule, reveal to the world their returns; nor do publishers, except by way of advertisement. The reader must understand also that, out of the enormous number of novels put into the field, very few indeed attain to any-

thing like a considerable success. It is the belief of many that when a writer has produced a novel he has made his fortune and may "command his own terms." The latter phrase is very common among those who know nothing. As a fact, a large proportion of the novels issued are produced at their own expense by writers, who very, very seldom get their money back; a great number are produced by the publishers in confidence based on experience, that the books will at least pay their expenses with some margin over. There is no risk, or very little, with these books; but there is commonly very little profit. In other words, if these novels which you see advertised, with so many laudatory "press opinions" after their names, manage to arrive at a meagre sale of six hundred copies, they have, in fact, paid their expenses and left a small margin over.

There are three or four stages in the progress of the novelist, unless he leaps at one bound upon the stage of Fame.

1. The bookseller will not, at first, "stock" his book. Thus, but for the circulating libraries, which take a few, it would fall dead.

2. It reaches a circulation of six hundred copies or so, with the meagre result of that small margin.

3. An edition of two thousand copies is practically sold off. This number seems to mark the next upward step. With this edition the demand ceases. This means, as we shall presently see, a

return of about £200 over and above the cost of production and advertising.

4. A circulation of from five thousand to ten thousand copies. This marks a very considerable popularity. There are very few novelists who can expect so large a circulation.

5. What is commonly called a "boom," that is to say, a great and simultaneous demand for many thousands. "Trilby" is the leading case of a "boom." But one need hardly consider a "boom," because it is, in the nature of things, very rare and most uncertain. No one can explain why the public is attracted with one consent by any book. It happens, as a rule, not more than once in the life of any author, and it often happens, further, that it is not that author's best work which proves so attractive, but a work much below his best.

In another chapter (p. 145), I will give certain figures as to the cost of production and the proceeds of novels. Meantime the reader may accept an assurance that novel-writing, if one is successful, may become a highly profitable business by the English volume right alone, provided the author knows how to treat with his publisher. He can only do this properly if he learns and carefully keeps in his mind the figures which will presently be given.

But the working of a novel means a great deal more than the English volume rights alone. It may mean:

1. The English serial right.
2. The American serial right.
3. The right of translation.
4. The English volume right.
5. The American volume right.
6. The Colonial rights. (These are at present somewhat doubtful.)
7. The Continental right.
8. The Dramatic right.

Every one of these rights belongs to the author, *not to the publisher*, and should be guarded carefully and treated separately. In other words, every one of these rights, when an author is in demand, has its own possible and distinct value, though some may be small. You must bear in mind very carefully the existence of these rights; and you must be prepared to find your publisher, in his agreement, advancing claims upon these rights *which you must rigidly strike out*. What these are likely to be will be exposed in following pages.

(iii). Educational books.

These, if they become popular, are certainly the most valuable kind of literary property. There are educational writers who make thousands a year by their school books. As a rule, however, they have no notion what their publishers make, a point to which I shall return later on (p. 174). Books published for Board schools, if they are adopted, may go off by the million. Books in use by the lower forms of public

schools have an enormous sale. The writer of educational books must of a necessity be himself a teacher. Moreover, he must be as a rule, a man of repute in his own line.

(iv). Of the Drama.

I have already spoken of the Dramatist. He practises an art in which success is most difficult because the new writer so seldom gets a chance. It is the hardest thing in the world to get a new piece by a new writer on the stage. When a piece succeeds it is paid for by a fee for every performance, or by a percentage on the receipts, when it succeeds greatly it is carried round by country companies, by American companies, by Colonial companies. And the writer at a single step may become one of the spoiled children of Fortune.

We need not here consider other writers—scientific, technical, historical, theological, philosophical, medical, and the rest. The writers generally belong to the literary life by writing one or two such books. They are professors, lecturers, teachers of all kinds. Such books may have a great commercial value, and they may have no commercial value at all. It depends on the name and reputation of the author, and on the character of the subject, whether it is one in demand or not. For instance, there cannot be a more scientific subject than Advanced Mathematics, and hardly any which may find a smaller public. Again, the greatest authority on Zoology

may produce a work of inestimable value which may appeal to a scanty audience of a few dozen only.

No one, then, should count upon being able to live by his books unless he is either (1) an educational writer; (2) a dramatist whose plays are here considered as books; or (3) a novelist or story-teller.

It is always possible, of course, that a book which does not belong to any one of these three classes may turn out to be a good property. One thinks of the works of Freeman, Froude, Seeley, Stubbs, Green, or Gardiner; of Stevenson's Essays; of certain biographies; of certain religious works—in the line of family prayers, fifty years ago, fortunes were made; there are hymn books which must bring in an enormous income to their proprietors; of children's books; of books on popular science, which may be very valuable, but a man has but one subject and can produce but one popular work on that subject; of certain books of travel which never die. At the same time the best books ever written in their own line may prove of no commercial value whatever. Let no man, therefore, dream that he is going to make money by the production of a book unless it is a work of fiction or an educational work. He may do so; on the other hand, most likely he will not. Thousands of books pay their expenses, but little more. Of the other thousands which do not pay their expenses the authors for the most part are the losers.

Fourteen years ago I stated in an address upon literary property that fifty writers at least in America and England were making over a thousand a year by literature, especially by novels. This assertion was received with the contempt which is natural when people speak or think of authorship. I knew, however, the facts of the case. If I were speaking to-day to another audience on the same subject I should modify that statement. I should say that, considering novels alone, there are at this moment one thousand three hundred living novelists, that is to say, one thousand three hundred novelists whose works are taken by the circulating libraries —you may count them in Smith's catalogue. Out of these some ten or a dozen may rank with successful physicians or lawyers. There are now sixty or seventy—English and American novelists—whose incomes reach the four figures. There are some hundred-and-fifty making from £400 upwards by story-telling. There are another two hundred who make from a hundred upwards. The rest of the one thousand three hundred make little or nothing.

In other words, the profession of literature in its various branches includes the humble writer of stories for the penny populars, who are happy if they make two pounds a week by their work, and it includes the historian whose work should bring him a great many thousands; the writer of successful educational books, whose income

should be that of a bishop; and the writer of novels which fly over the whole world, and should give him the income of a successful physician.

This is what is meant by literary property, and the time has come when the world should know what it means, and how the creator and owner of it should defend it; how real a thing it is; and how jealously it should be defended.

Chapter II.

The Cost of Production.

The chapters which follow are of extreme importance to every author in every branch of literature. The person who writes a book has created a possible property : this is the key-note of all that follows : it may be a property of great value, which will continue to retain its value as long as the legal time of copyright lasts ; it may be a property of great value for a short time only ; it may be a property of very small value ; or even a property of no value at all. In any case it is the property of the author and creator. Of that fact there can be no question at all. The pretensions of publishers over literary property have gone far (as witness their "Draft Agreements,") but they have stopped short of claiming the author's MS. as their own absolute property as a right.

At the outset, the hitherto inexperienced reader will please to dismiss from his mind all preconceived ideas about publishers : it has been a custom of the trade, and, I suppose, will

always be the endeavour of the trade, to pose as the unselfish patrons of literature, and, therefore, of literary men: as disinterested producers of books, by the sale of which they constantly lose large sums of money. The reader must understand that all this is mere "trade" talk: it should no longer impose upon anybody. Publishers are purely and simply men of business: there is no reproach in this statement; they publish in order to make money; exactly like all other men in business, they work to make money: they deal with authors as they deal with booksellers, and as they deal with printers, paper-makers, binders, solely with the view of making money by the transaction. This statement, if you think of it, stands to reason. When a man's livelihood, or his comfort, depends upon the successful conduct of his business, it is naturally absurd to suppose that he will be guided by any other motive than the determination to achieve success. And, if dishonesty can be practised with impunity, while a few will be restrained from dishonesty by scruples of honour, the majority will not.

If these considerations are borne in mind, the reader may be saved, perhaps, from grievous pecuniary loss; perhaps from rude awakenings. I would say to a young writer, "When you enter a publisher's shop; when you send him a MS.; you become, like all the other persons engaged in the production of a book, a man to be "bested;"

he will exercise his most earnest endeavours to get your property into his own hands on the best terms possible for himself. Expect no other consideration ; weigh everything that he says with the knowledge that this is his one object ; accept all courtesies and flatteries as designed to win your confidence ; prepare yourself, therefore, at the outset, if you can, by ascertaining what publishing actually means, or, if you cannot, place yourself in the hands of some skilled person who does know. Do not be deluded by the champagne and the lunch he may offer you. Do not be taken in by plausible words and plausible manners ; do not on any account without advice accept as plain truth any or every statement that he may make : and, ABOVE ALL THINGS, *do not sign any agreement without the advice of persons who are skilled.*

Who are "skilled persons?" The reader probably believes that the ordinary solicitor is such a person. As a rule, the ordinary solicitor knows absolutely nothing at all about the subject of publishing. He is worse than useless. The methods of publishing are not mentioned in the books which he has had to study ; there is no examination in the subject ; the only skilled persons are the Secretary of the Society of Authors ; one or two members of his committee ; and one or two literary agents—mind—only one or two. Many so-called literary agents are in complete ignorance of the real points at issue and will only

give you away: one or two are said to be actually in the pay of publishers. Now a literary agent who takes money from publishers is a traitor of the very worst kind. The two principal points of study are—(1). The cost of production, and (2) the prices given for books by the retail trade. In other words, you can only find out what a publisher's proffered agreement means by knowing (1) what a book costs to produce, and (2) what the publisher gets for it from the bookseller. It is absolutely necessary, if you would know the nature of the offer which a publisher is making you, that you should learn, approximately, both these points; or, at least, which is perhaps better still, that you should be in a position to command access to information on these points.

In the following pages I propose to place this power of informing yourself in your hands.

1. The Cost of Production.

This means (i) the cost of "composition," *i.e.*, setting up the type; (ii) the cost of "printing," called also "machining" or "working"; (iii) the cost of "moulding," which is the first step towards "stereotyping"; (iv) the cost of paper; (v) the cost of binding; and (vi) the cost of advertising. The cost of "corrections" is also a part of the cost of production. Perhaps that of typewriting, too, ought to fall under this head. As yet, however, publishers have ingeni-

ously managed to make typewriting fall upon the author's shoulders, though the process enormously diminishes the "corrections," and saves a great deal of money on the printer's bill.

To these are sometimes added the "fancy" items—all the charges that a rich imagination can invent—"incidental expenses"; postage; "gilt lettering"; "making a block"; or "office expenses."

2. The Composition or Setting up of the Type.

The setting up of the type means the employment of the printer for so many hours in setting up and in distributing the type used in printing a book.

The "sheet" is reckoned sometimes as of 16 pp., but, of late, more frequently as of 32 pp.

The "machining" or "printing" is, like the composition, charged by the sheet.

3. The Moulding and Stereotyping.

After the book has been printed, the type is moulded if there is any expectation of a second edition. "Moulding" means taking a plaster cast of the type used for the printing, to be set aside and kept, so that the type may be released and distributed. It is done at a cost of 4/6 or 5/- for a sheet of 16 pp.

When the second edition is called for, the moulding is "stereotyped," that is to say, stereotype plates are made from the mould and used

for printing. The cost of stereotyping is generally about 7/6 to 8/6 a sheet of 16 pp. It varies somewhat with the size of the page.

Moulding should be a charge on the first edition : stereotyping on the second.

4. Paper.

The next charge is for paper, which is now very cheap, and apparently becoming cheaper every year. It costs about 2½d. or 2¾d. a lb. The cost of paper will be gathered from the examples which follow. Sometimes it is charged at so much the sheet, but the more common method is to charge by the pound weight.

5. Binding.

The next consideration is the cost of binding. A plain and serviceable one, quite as good as that used by publishers for general purposes costs £15 a thousand, or 3⅗d. a volume. Perhaps it would be well to set down the charge for quite plain binding of an 8vo. book, at this sum ; for larger books in proportion, say 6d. or 8d.

6. Corrections.

The meaning of corrections is this. They are charged at the rate of a shilling an hour, or, in some cases, fifteen pence, for the work of each printer employed. Now it is extremely difficult to say how many words a compositor can alter in a given time. If the author corrects so as to "over-run," *i.e.*, to alter the line and carry on part of it into the next and following

lines, he may cause an alteration of the whole page, line by line, down to the end of the paragraph and even beyond it. If he does this he very materially increases the cost of correction. It is thus most difficult to check the charge for corrections. The only method which will enable the author to check approximately this item, is for him to preserve carefully the first proofs, with his corrections upon them, and to insist upon receiving them back with his revise.

7. Advertising.

The cost of advertising is a very serious consideration. Every book must be advertised. But where? And to what extent?

The advertisement of a book must bear some reference to its actual and its possible sale. This elementary fact is constantly forgotten by authors, especially when they accuse publishers of not advertising their books sufficiently. Thus a book which at best commands a very limited sale cannot "bear" more advertising than is necessary to announce it.

The advertisement of a book by a popular author sure of a large circulation calls for an outlay upon advertising which need not be large, and in any case it is small in proportion to the circulation.

The best medium for advertising is the daily paper. There are also one or two weekly papers which are useful.

The author must always demand details of the advertisements charged on the accounts ren-

dered. He must refuse absolutely to pay anything for advertisements in the publisher's own organs, except the mere cost of setting up and printing—a few pence. Nor must he pay for advertisements which are only exchanges. That is to say, a publisher who runs a monthly magazine may exchange advertisements with a brother who runs another. For this exchange he has no right to charge. The reader is carefully warned on this point. The Society of Authors has twice taken counsel's opinion on this point, which is to the effect that a publisher has no right to charge for advertisements in his own organs, except for the cost of setting up the type.

The following table shows what is meant by the cost of advertising reduced to a charge on every volume :—

If	500	copies are sold the expenditure of			£10	means—for each volume ... $4\frac{4}{5}$d.
If	1,000	„	„	„	„	... $2\frac{2}{5}$d.
If	2,000	„	„	„	„	... $1\frac{1}{5}$d.
If	5,000	„	„	„	„	... $\frac{1}{2}$d.
If	10,000	„	„	„	„	... $\frac{1}{4}$d.

This little table proves that extensive advertising on a book with a limited sale is impossible, because it increases so enormously the cost of production. For instance, suppose that the cost of production of such a book is £50 for a small edition of five hundred ; this means 2/- a volume. If the trade price is 3/6, this allows a margin of 1/6 a copy. If £10 be spent on advertisements, the cost of production becomes $2/4\frac{4}{5}$ a copy, so

that the margin becomes 1/1$\frac{4}{5}$. If £20 be spent in advertising, the cost becomes 2/9$\frac{3}{5}$, and the margin becomes 8$\frac{2}{5}$d., and so on. Another consideration is that advertisements do not by themselves cause a book to "go." The circulating libraries are far more useful than any advertising columns. They introduce a book. The readers do the rest: for they talk about a book. As soon as it is talked about, and not till then, the demand begins. The publisher, also, if he is in a large way, has his circulars. He can advertise his books in these organs; and he exchanges with other publishers.

8. Illustrations.

There are so many processes and methods of illustration, that it is quite impossible to define the cost of illustrating a book. Lithography cannot be used for letterpress illustrations. Photogravure is now the most common method of illustrating a book. The drawings must be first made—which may cost a great deal; or the photograph must first be taken, which costs very little indeed. The cost of the blocks varies from sixpence to a shilling the square inch.

9. Extras.

Under the head of extras a great many charges may take place. For instance, if an author uses words in a foreign language or in foreign character, as Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, he will find every word charged separately, unless these words have been considered in the general estimate.

Notes at the side or the foot are charged extra.
Tabular work is an extra.
Mathematical work requires a separate estimate.
Different kinds of type are an extra.
The index is an extra.
Second titles, dedications, &c., on a single page are charged as if the whole page was printed.

After these explanations let us return to the book before us.

With this introduction the reader will be prepared to consider the following actual estimates, which I am enabled to produce. It must be remembered that a publisher would get lower estimates, because he would buy paper in large quantities, and cloth for binding by the acre.

I have given a good many examples, first, for the different kinds of type and page: next, to show the differences among printers. I hope my readers will study these figures carefully, and learn for themselves what a book really costs to produce.

I. Book of 272 pp., 253 words to a page, small pica type, sheet of 16 pp., 500 copies only.

	£	s.	d.
Composition, 17 sheets at 22/6 ...	19	2	6
Printing, 17 sheets at 5/3	4	9	3
Paper, 8½ reams at 15/-	6	7	6
Moulding only, at 5/-	4	5	0
Binding, 4d.	8	6	8
	£42	10	11

Stereotyping at 8/- a sheet.

II. Book of 20 sheets, 320 pp., 339 words to a page, long primer type, 1,000 copies.

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Composition, 20 sheets at 26 - ...	26	0	0
Printing, 20 sheets at 8/6	8	10	0
Paper at 15/-...	15	0	0
Moulding, at 5/-	5	0	0
Binding, at 3½d.	14	11	8
	£69	1	8

Stereotyping, at 8/- a sheet.

III. For 800 copies of a book in demy 8vo., pica type, 25 sheets, 281 words and 32 lines to a page.

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Composition, 25 sheets at 21/- ...	26	5	0
Printing, 25 sheets at 9/6	11	17	6
Paper, 12½ reams at 20/-	12	10	0
Moulding only, 6/-	7	10	0
Binding, at 6d.	20	0	0
	£78	2	6

IV. Small pica, 20 sheets, 22 lines to a page, 288 words in a page, 1,000 copies.

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Composition, 20 sheets of 16 pp., at 20/-	20	0	0
Printing, 20 sheets of 16 pp. at 8/- .	8	0	0
Paper, „ „ „ 14/- .	14	0	0
Binding, at 34/- per 100 vols., just over 4d. each	17	0	0
Moulding, 20 sheets at 4/6	4	10	0
Stereotyping, at 7/6	7	10	0
	£71	0	0

V. A second edition of 3,000 copies.

	£	s.	d.
Printing, 20 sheets of 16 pp. at 16/- ...	16	0	0
Paper, at 42/- a sheet	42	0	0
Binding, at 34/- per 100 copies ...	51	0	0
	£109	0	0

i.e., $8\frac{4}{5}$d. a copy.

VI. A second edition of 10,000 copies.

	£	s.	d.
Printing 20 sheets at 35/-	35	0	0
Paper	140	0	0
Binding, £15 per 1,000	150	0	0
	£325	0	0

i.e., $7\frac{4}{5}$d. a copy.

VII. A book of 20 sheets, 16 pp. to a sheet, 23 lines or 184 words to a page. Edition, 500 copies.

	£	s.	d.
Composition, 20 sheets, 16 pp., at 13/3 a sheet	13	5	0
Printing, 20 sheets, 16 pp., at 7/- a sheet	7	0	0
Paper, 20 sheets, 16 pp., at 7/- a sheet	7	0	0
Binding, 34/- per 100 vols. ...	8	10	0
Moulding, 4/6	4	10	0
Stereotyping at 7/-	7	0	0
	£47	5	0

VIII. A second edition of the same book, 1,000 copies.

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Printing... ...	8	0	0
Paper	14	0	0
Binding	17	0	0
	£39	0	0

or a second edition of 3,000 copies.

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Printing, at 16/-	16	0	0
Paper, at 42/- ...	42	0	0
Binding, at £15 per 1,000	45	0	0
	£103	0	0

If bourgeois type be used in the composition, the charge would be £1 6s. 8d. per sheet of 16 pp.

If brevier type be used in the composition, the charge would be £1 11s. 0d.

IX. An edition of 500 copies, the book to contain 22 sheets of 16 pp. each, and each page 360 words.

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Composition, 22 sheets of 16 pp., at £1 16s. 0d.	39	12	0
Printing, at 8/6	9	7	0
Paper, at 9/6	10	9	0
Binding, at 10d.	20	16	8
Moulding, at 6/6	7	3	0
Stereotyping, at 17/-	18	14	0
	£106	1	8

	£	s.	d.
For a second edition of 1,000.			
Printing, at 12/-	13	4	0
Paper	20	18	0
Binding, at 10d.	41	13	4
	£75	15	4

X. The following is not an estimate, but an actual bill. The book contained 12 sheets, of 32 pp. each. It was in long primer type. Number printed, 1,180.

	£	s.	d.
Composition, at £2 4s. 6d.	26	14	0
Extra for smaller type, etc. ...	4	11	0
Corrections	0	10	0
Machining, at 15/3	9	3	0
	40	18	0
Less discount, 5 per cent., for quarterly payment, £2 ...	38	18	0
Paper	14	18	6
Binding, at 51/6 per 100	30	7	6
Total ...	£84	4	0

XI. The following is a bill for a pamphlet.

	£	s.	d.
Composing $3\frac{3}{4}$ sheets, at £1 4s. ...	4	10	0
Printing 250 copies, at 5/-	1	0	0
Paper for $3\frac{3}{4}$ sheets, at 4/-	0	15	0
Wrappers and Printing	0	5	0
Folding and Stitching	0	10	0
	£7	0	0

XII. The next illustration is a comparative estimate, in order to show the differences between printers. The book contained 488 pp., small pica type.

First, for 1,000 copies.

	Composition			Printing			Paper			Binding		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
A.	38	17	9	13	4	0	15	5	0	16	11	0
B.	56	6	0	(together)			15	12	0	*no return*		
C.	41	3	6	13	14	6	no return			*no return*		

Next, for 2,000 copies.

A.	38	17	9	21	12	0	30	10	0	33	2	0
B.	63	5	0	(together)			31	4	0	no return		
C.	41	3	6	21	7	0	no return			no return		

XIII. Another illustration of comparative estimates:

The book was one of 20 sheets of 16 pp. each; or 10 sheets of 32 pp. The type was small pica; there were 29 lines to a page; the number of copies was to be 3000.

Composition per sheet of 32 pp.			(1)	£2	5	3
,,	,,	,,	(2)	2	8	0
,,	,,	,,	(3)	2	7	6
,,	,,	,,	(4)	2	12	0
,,	,,	,,	(5)	3	3	0
Printing per sheet of 32 pp.			(1)	£1	1	0
,,	,,	,,	(2)	1	7	0
,,	,,	,,	(3)	1	7	0
,,	,,	,,	(4)	1	18	0
,,	,,	,,	(5)	1	16	0

Taking the first estimate :

Composition ...	22	12	6
Printing	10	10	0
Paper	45	0	0
Binding	45	0	0
Moulding	5	0	0
	£128	2	6

or 10¼d. a copy.

XIV. A New York estimate. The book was one of 256 pp., set up in small pica, single leaded, at 224 words to a page.

Composition and electrotyping of 256 pp., at 80 cents. to a page ...	$204·80
Press work of 8 formes, *i.e.*, 8 sheets of 22 pp., at $4	$32
Press work of cover, in one colour ...	$2
Paper for cover, yellow coated ...	$3
Paper for text, 100 lbs., super., at $6 per ream	$52·50
Plate boxes, four at 65 cents. ...	$2·60
Binding (sewed)...	$20
For extra thousand covers	$5
Total cost for first thousand copies	$321·90

or £64·38, *i.e.*, £64 7s. 7d.

If 2,000 copies are printed, the total cost will be $418·40, or £83·68, *i.e.*, £83 13s. 7d.—10d. each.

A great deal is sometimes made of the cost of illustrations. Remember it is only one initial cost. When the drawing and the process have been paid for, the actual engraving costs very little indeed.

So far, for the cost of production or manufacture. You now understand very nearly what it costs to turn a MS. into a book. You will remember that these figures are not hard and fast: that they vary; but that they are figures actually estimated and actually adopted.

11. The Trade Price.

After learning the cost of composition, printing, paper, stereotyping, and binding, that is to say, the whole cost of production, the next step is to learn the price which the publisher receives from the trade.

The terms made by publishers are not uniform. There are different terms with booksellers and with distributing houses, which in their turn offer the odd copy to the trade. I am indebted to a publisher for a complete return of the sales of a popular six shilling novel. There were many different prices. Taken altogether the average trade price was 3/6 within a tiny fraction. We may therefore assume that the publisher gets an average of 3/6, and that the bookseller pays an average of 3/9½: while the distributing houses pay an average of 3/5.

The bookseller gets a profit on each volume, *if he sells all he buys*, of 8½d. But he does not sell all he buys. The publisher and author between them get a profit of 2/6.

But there is more. If a second edition is called for it may be produced at about 8d. a copy. The bookseller gets no advantage of this

diminution in the cost of production, nor generally does the author. The bookseller continues to get his 8½d., *if he sells the book which he has paid for*. The publisher makes 2s. 10d. a copy, of which the author has to get his share.

On the first sight of these figures it is obvious that the bookseller is charged too much. What the author's share generally is we shall see presently.

Some years ago the Society of Authors published a book called the "Methods of Publishing," to which they added another called the "Cost of Production." These books caused great consternation among those publishers who had most reason to fear the light. The figures were impudently denied; yet, like those given above, they were actual estimates prepared by printers. They revealed, for the first time, the true meaning of the cost of bringing out a book, a thing which had been hitherto kept in the darkest mystery. No one had been allowed to know what it meant, neither author, nor bookseller, nor even printer, bookbinder, or paper-maker. The publisher kept the knowledge entirely to himself. Now, thanks to the Society of Authors, everybody may know. The reader is most strongly advised to get these two books. Of the latter, a new edition is in preparation, and will shortly be published. By the aid of these two books and this chapter, the reader will be enabled first to make his own calculation as to the

cost of producing his own book in any form, and next to check and criticise any agreement which may be submitted to him. If he cannot make this estimate for himself, he should refer to the Society of Authors.

The Publisher's Vade Mecum.

The following table is prepared for the use of publishers as a ready reckoner. It means the price paid by the retail trade, subject to certain discounts:

		p. c.		10 p. c.		12½ p. c.		15 p. c.	
s.	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*
0	6	0	$3\frac{3}{4}$	0	$3\frac{1}{2}$	0	$3\frac{7}{16}$	0	$3\frac{5}{16}$
1	0	0	$7\frac{7}{1}$	0	$7\frac{1}{16}$	0	$6\frac{7}{8}$	0	$6\frac{11}{16}$
1	6	0	$11\frac{3}{8}$	0	$10\frac{3}{4}$	0	$10\frac{1}{2}$	0	$10\frac{3}{16}$
2	0	1	3	1	2	1	$1\frac{3}{4}$	1	$1\frac{1}{4}$
2	6	1	$6\frac{1}{2}$	1	$5\frac{1}{2}$	1	5	1	$4\frac{1}{2}$
3	0	1	10	1	$8\frac{3}{4}$	1	$8\frac{1}{4}$	1	$7\frac{1}{2}$
3	6	2	$2\frac{1}{4}$	2	1	2	$0\frac{1}{4}$	1	$11\frac{1}{2}$
4	0	2	$5\frac{3}{4}$	2	$4\frac{1}{4}$	2	$3\frac{1}{2}$	2	$2\frac{3}{4}$
4	6	2	$9\frac{1}{4}$	2	$7\frac{1}{2}$	2	$6\frac{3}{4}$	2	$5\frac{3}{4}$
5	0	3	$1\frac{3}{4}$	2	$11\frac{3}{4}$	2	$10\frac{3}{4}$	2	$9\frac{3}{4}$
6	0	3	$7\frac{3}{4}$	3	$5\frac{1}{2}$	3	$4\frac{1}{2}$	3	$3\frac{1}{4}$
7	6	4	8	4	$5\frac{1}{4}$	4	$3\frac{3}{4}$	4	$2\frac{1}{4}$
8	0	4	$11\frac{3}{4}$	4	$8\frac{1}{2}$	4	7	4	$5\frac{1}{2}$

The calculations are based on sale price 13 as 12, but, as it is not the custom to give this discount on single copies, the average is, of course, very sensibly raised.

To sum up the figures and meaning of this chapter.

The following table will show approximately what is the commercial value of an ordinary book—not necessarily a novel, sold at 6/- I have taken a volume of 320 pp., of about 300 words to the page, plainly bound, in small pica type, and on good, but not expensive paper. The stated cost includes moderate advertising.

(i) Suppose one thousand copies printed, and five hundred bound and sold.
The cost is about £85.
Average retail price 3/6.
500 copies at 3/6—£87 10s.
Profit, nominal.

(ii) Suppose two thousand copies printed, and one thousand bound and sold.
The cost is about £100.
Average retail price 3/6.
1000 at 3/6—£175.
Profit, £75.

(iii) Suppose two thousand copies printed, bound, and sold.
The cost is about £115.
Average price 3/6.
2000 at 3/6—£350.
Profit, £235.

(iv) Three thousand printed and sold.
Cost about £150.
Average price 3/6.
3000 at 3/6, less press copies—£516.
Profit, £366.

(v) Ten thousand printed and sold.
Cost about £350.
Average price 3/6.
10,000 at 3/6—£1,750.
Profit, £1,400.

More detailed figures, showing the cost of various kinds of books in different type, etc., are given in the "Cost of Production," already referred to, published by the Society of Authors. These figures, however, are sufficient to shew the meaning of literary property by the example of one book. The cost of production can be, and generally is, made very much cheaper.

(i). Namely, when a great deal of work is put into the hands of a printer.

(ii). When paper is bought in large quantities.

(iii). When cloth for binding is bought in large quantities.

(iv). By sending the book to a country printer, or to a printer in Holland. Certain publishers send a great deal of their printing to Holland.

The issue of books at a penny, sixpence, and a shilling shows the cheapness of printing and paper. This phenomenal cheapness is only possible in very large issues. Machines can now print at once a sheet of 32pp —and the new modes of manufacture have very greatly cheapened paper. A very slight rise in the price of paper would cause half the penny journals to stop at

once, and would make the very cheap issues of books impossible.

Chapter III.

The Methods of Publishing.

There are four principal methods:

1. The sale of the property outright.
2. A profit sharing agreement.
3. A royalty system.
4. Publishing on commission.

I. The rule of the game in the first method is easy and simple. It consists simply of trying to buy a property which may be worth many hundreds, or even many thousands, for a song. Thus, some years ago, the Society of Authors exposed the usage of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, in giving £12, £20, or £30 for books which brought them, in some cases, very large sums. Thus, in one case, £12 was given for an historical work, with a promise of more if the book should be successful. As many as 5,000 copies were acknowledged to have been sold, yet the righteous committee refused to give anything more to the author! It is true

that the promise was denied, but there also seems to have been no examination into the correspondence, nor any offer to show the correspondence. Such things are done in the holy name of Religion! Other instances are on record, and in plenty, of miserable sums offered for popular books. Thus stories are told of an offer of £15, £25, and so on, for the complete copyright and possession of a literary work which afterwards turned out to be a considerable property. Of course, publishers are free to offer what they please. But *let the author refuse.* If he is an "established" writer, that is to say, one with a name, he may deal after this method because he has some knowledge of what he is worth. But not a new writer.

Let the author with the figures we have given him, find out what profit or loss accrues on sales of 500, 1,000, and more copies. He will then be able to judge what an offer means.

II. Let us turn to the PROFIT-SHARING AGREEMENT. Here the dangers are manifold.

The cost of production under its various headings may be, and very commonly is, falsely represented.

In other words, if an expenditure of £100 has been incurred, it may be set down at £120, or, indeed at any figure that the publisher pleases. (See the previous remarks on the Draft Agreements which make this possible.)

The charge for advertising does not credit the author with the discounts. These are sometimes heavy. Thus, if a bill is sent in for £100 a discount may be taken off varying from five per cent. to anything, according to the practice of the paper. To pay £80 and to call it £100 under this heading is to take £20 secretly and by means of a falsehood.

But, the inexperienced author says, the publisher who does this must be dishonest. Exactly. He must. The author, therefore, must make up his mind to the solid fact that he will have to treat a publisher as he treats other people, viz., as possibly dishonest.

"Office expenses" are charged.

Undoubtedly there are office expenses. This means that a business cannot be carried on without rent, taxes, and servants. But booksellers also have their office expenses. Do publishers make allowance for the office expenses of booksellers? I have never heard of such a case. With booksellers, office expenses have got to come out of profits as in any other business. Why, then, should publishers claim extra allowance for office expenses which they refuse to booksellers, and which no other men claim, either professional men or business men? They are paid for the administration of a property in which they are partners; they do this by means of their clerks and servants; what have they done for the property except administer it? They have incurred

risk, it is argued. We will come to the question of risk, immediately. Meantime, the ready answer is that they need not incur risk unless they please.

Again, they offer no allowance to the author for his office expenses. Now the office expenses of a writer are sometimes very considerable. There are his books, which are his tools; think of the library which a writer on any especial branch must possess or command; in many cases his command of, or access to, a great library is not enough; one must have the books always to hand; there is the rent of his study and library; the services which he requires; often he engages a shorthand clerk, a secretary, a type-writer. I offer a case of personal experience. Some years ago I was asked to contribute to what was called "Macmillan's Red Series," a biography of Captain Cook. I had in my possession a large number of books on eighteenth century voyages; I had already a considerable knowledge of this explorer and his work: I had, besides, access to special information, of which nobody else knew anything. It became necessary, however, to undertake three journeys into the country of two or three days each, in order to complete this and to get other information. These journeys, without counting the additional books which had to be bought, cost me over £30. What was this expenditure but "office expenses?" The price paid for the work was one

hundred pounds or guineas—nothing being allowed for my "office expenses." I do not grumble, because I was perfectly free to accept or refuse. But I state the bare facts of the case. My "office expenses"—certainly £52—had to come out of this £100. Put them as follows: (1). Journeys, £30. (2). Copying a Log, £7. (3). Books, £5. (4). Rent of Office for three months, and postage and incidental expenses, £12. Total, £52.

Again, some years ago, a certain Professor wrote a learned work on a point of German history. This work cost him two separate residences in Berlin, each of many weeks, besides the books which he had to buy. These were "office expenses," of which the author said nothing. Instances innumerable could be given in which the "office expenses" of the author are very considerable—perhaps altogether exceeding the returns of his book. Yet nothing is ever said about them. An author often must incur very heavy expenses. But he is treated as if he had no expenses at all.

The only way to a fair adjustment of the question is to let both publisher and author take a percentage from the actual returns for "office expenses," and for the bookseller to take an additional discount for his "office expenses."

Here are two accounts (see "Methods of Publishing," p. 32), showing side by side, a Pub-

lisher's account and an independent Printer's estimate for the same work. It was in two volumes.

Publisher's Account.

	£	s.	d.
Paper and Print—750 copies ...	154	4	0
Drawing illustration ... 42 0 0			
Drawing on stone and printing 52 13 1	94	13	1
Binding 500 copies at 65/- per 100, *i.e.*, $7\frac{4}{5}$d. a copy	16	5	0
	265	2	1

Printer's Estimate.

	£	s.	d.
Paper and Printing	123	0	0
Illustration, drawing, and printing	48	0	0
Binding 500 copies at 5d. ...	10	8	4
	181	8	4

A difference of £84!

Can anyone believe that this difference was due to chance, or to superior work—or to ignorance? The £84 odd was the Publisher's *secret profit on the production alone*, apart from the profit which he was to realize by the sale of the book.

And now, I think, enough has been said to show that the profit-sharing agreement must not be undertaken without serious consideration and due precautions against secret profits.

III. The Royalty System.

Authors at first jumped at the proposal of a royalty, because they thought something, at any rate, would come to them. In this expectation, as you shall see, they have been deceived. Publishers, for their part, welcomed the royalty system first because it saved them from the trouble (and perhaps the shame) of falsifying accounts, but chiefly because the profound ignorance of authors as regards the cost of production and the management and meaning of literary property enabled them to offer the unfortunate author a very small fraction of the proceeds of his own property. Thus royalties of ten per cent., which you shall understand presently, were freely offered, and even smaller royalties, while some of them even went so far as to offer royalties on the *trade* price instead of the advertised price. Thus ten per cent. has been given on the trade price. In the case we have already considered this would mean one-tenth of 3/6, *i.e.*, 4½d. on each copy of a 6/- book.

For a detailed account of the various ways of trading on the author's ignorance, I refer the reader to "Methods of Publishing," chapter v. Let us, however, take a sample case of figures.

We will examine the following table of what different royalties give to the publisher and the author respectively on our example of a book.

A percentage of	5	10	15	20	25	30	35
On 6/- gives to the publisher	2·2$\frac{2}{5}$	1·10$\frac{4}{5}$	1·7$\frac{1}{5}$	1·3$\frac{3}{5}$	1·0	8$\frac{2}{5}$	4$\frac{4}{5}$
To the author	3$\frac{3}{5}$d.	7$\frac{1}{5}$d.	10$\frac{4}{5}$	1·2$\frac{2}{5}$	1·6	1·9$\frac{3}{5}$	2·1$\frac{1}{5}$

But there is another consideration—that of the second edition.

In the second edition the cost in the case adduced would be 8d. on each edition of 3,000, the profit, therefore, would be 2/10 on each copy.

Now for the royalties.

A percentage of	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40
On 6/- gives to the Publisher	2/6$\frac{2}{5}$	2/2$\frac{4}{5}$	1/11$\frac{1}{5}$	1/7$\frac{3}{5}$	1/4	1/0$\frac{2}{5}$	/8$\frac{1}{5}$	/5$\frac{1}{5}$
The author	/3$\frac{3}{5}$	/7$\frac{1}{5}$	/10$\frac{4}{5}$	1/2$\frac{2}{5}$	1/6	1·9$\frac{3}{5}$	2/1$\frac{2}{5}$	2/4$\frac{4}{5}$

But the book was not, we will suppose, a complete success. Perhaps only 2,000 out of the 3,000 would be sold, the rest being disposed of as remainder-stock in sheets. The full cost of the 2,000 then would be nearly £130, or very nearly one shilling and threepence a copy, not allowing for the sale of the sheets.

The figures now stand as follows :—

A percentage of	5	10	15	20	25	30	35
On 6/- gives to the Publisher	1/11$\frac{2}{5}$	1/7$\frac{4}{5}$	1/4$\frac{1}{5}$	1/0$\frac{2}{5}$	/9	/5$\frac{2}{5}$	/1$\frac{4}{5}$
To the Author	/3$\frac{3}{5}$	/7$\frac{1}{5}$	/10$\frac{4}{5}$	1/2$\frac{2}{5}$	1/6	1/9$\frac{3}{5}$	2/1$\frac{1}{5}$

But a brilliant discovery was made. This was the deferred royalty. In other words the publisher proposed to pay no royalty at all until enough copies had been sold to pay the whole cost of production, with any percentages he chose to make, and then to pay the author as small a royalty as he dared to offer. In his ignorance and helplessness the author mostly consented, and so got nothing, because somehow the limit was never reached.

Let us see with the case before us what this means. For the whole edition of 3,000 copies, to pay this cost of production, about 850 copies would have to be sold. The offer would probably be—to begin a royalty after 900 copies had been sold. Now for our figures. Remember that the publisher has 2,200 copies in his hands, without counting "overs," whose production has been paid for. The copies cost him nothing. He has therefore 3/6 clear on every copy, after 850. The following are the respective shares on the various royalties.

	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50
Publisher	3·2⅖	2·10⅘	2·7⅕	2·3⅗	2·0	1·8⅖	1·4⅘	1·1⅕	9⅖	6d.
Author's Royalty.	3⅗	7⅕	10⅘	1·2⅖	1·6	1·9⅗	2·1⅕	2·4⅘	2.8⅖	3·0

So that, if a royalty is to begin after the cost of production is covered, in order that there may be a fair division of profits, the author must have a 30 per cent. royalty.

These figures prove perfectly clearly that the publisher who offers a low royalty is simply putting into his own pockets the greater part of the proceeds. The fact cannot be denied. Those who practise this trick, if they try to defend it at all, fall back upon "risk" (of which more will be said immediately) and "office expenses."

As regards the deferred royalty, however, there is worse behind. There are cases which have been dragged to light in which the author, for a wretched sum of £25 down, has been persuaded to accept a low royalty *after* 7,000 *copies have been sold!*

The only fair way in which a royalty system should be worked is that of recognising the figures and facts and agreeing upon a division of the profits with nothing secret or false in the accounts.

Thus, the author should take a low royalty for the first 1,000 copies and a higher royalty for succeeding copies. The reader can work out for himself the figures.

IV. Publication by Commission.

By this method the author undertakes whatever risk there may be in the cost of production. One would think that this method was so simple that there would be no possible danger of being plundered. Just to give a publisher a commission on the sale of a book is so plain that there can be nothing to guard against. But the unfortunate

author seldom knows the extent of his publisher's ingenuity. What he does and what he claims as a right is to begin with a fee: to add a percentage—anything he pleases on every item of the cost; to put in his own pocket all the discounts; and to charge for advertising in his own organ and by exchanges. The Draft Agreements claim this right. *But he does not put these clauses in his agreements.* Thus, if the cost of the book be £100, and the sales amount to £300, the author expects the following simple account:

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Cost of production ...	100	0	0	By sales	300	0	0
Publisher's commission at 15 per cent. ...	45	0	0				
To Author	155	0	0				
	£300	0	0		£300	0	0

What he will probably get is something like the following, but with the omission of the explanatory items. Observe that the alleged cost of production has to be paid in advance, which costs the author half-a-year's interest, and that the publisher keeps the author's money for about a year, which gives him the interest for that time.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Alleged cost	165	0	0	True sales	300	0	0
Publisher's fee ...	10	0	0	Less 15 per cent. for bad debts and office expenses	45	0	0
Discounts (secret) ...	15	0	0				
Incidental expenses ...	5	0	0				
Publisher's commission (as by agreement).	38	5	0		£255	0	0
Due to author	21	15	0				
	£255	0	0		£255	0	0

By this arrangement the publisher receives £178, and the author £21, or, since the real profit is £200, the publisher takes very nearly seven-eighths, leaving the author one-fourth!

It is quite clear that this is not a method to be recommended. It will be objected that none but the most dishonest firms could act in such a manner. On the contrary, it is the Publishers' Association, through their Committee, which claims the right to all these things. To be sure, it says nothing about the charge for advertisements not paid for, but their silence on such an important point, to which the Authors' Society has over and over again called attention, must be taken for consent.

Obviously this is not a good way of publishing.

But the author may send his MS. to a printer, and give the book to a publisher on commission. It would seem that he could do nothing then but sell the book. He has still, however, the advertisements in his hands, and he proposes in the "Draft Agreements," to make profits for himself out of them. Moreover, as said before, when he has nothing but his simple commission he is pretty certain to press other books on which he makes more, before this.

There is another peril attached to publishing by commission. The unwary author may send his MS. to one of the houses which have to advertise for authors. He receives, almost by return post, a letter, always couched in the same terms. The publisher is pleased to inform the author that his reader has sent in "so favourable a report" of the work that he is prepared to offer the following "exceptional terms." The author is to pay £90 down, which will cover all the expense of production: the publisher promises to bring out an edition of 750 or 1500 or anything, and to continue to bring out more while the demand continues: the returns are to be divided in certain proportions. The agreement is sent down. The author writes to say that he cannot afford £90. The publisher replies that he will take £70. This offer is accepted, because the author is pleased to find a publisher anxious to have the

work. It is sent to the printers. It comes out. The author then complains that the book is not advertised. "Oh!" says the publisher, "you said nothing about advertisements. They are an extra, of course. Send me £10." He presently forwards a copy of the *Stoke Pogis Gazette*, in which the book is advertised. Of course there are no returns. The publisher has spent probably £40 on the book and has pocketed the rest.

This kind of thing goes on all the year round. There are two firms at least which do nothing else. And there are hardly any firms which refuse commission books, with the pleasing results to the author that we have seen above.

Another way is the famous "guarantee" trick. In this case the author engages to "guarantee" so many copies—say 350. That is to say, if, after six months or so, less than 350 copies have been sold the author has to pay for the deficit; if 50 copies only are sold he has to send the publisher the trade price of 300 copies —lucky if he is not obliged to pay full price. But after that, at least he gets the returns. Not at all. The publisher by a judicious and crafty silence in the agreement *keeps all the rest in his own hands!* You think this is incredible. It is strictly and literally true. The trick has been exposed in *The Author* from several cases actually brought before the Secretary of the Society.

A very flagrant case of this "method" was

brought to the Secretary some years ago. A well-known writer in a certain line placed a large and important MS. in the hands of a publisher; he gave him also a quantity of illustrations already in plates. The book was produced in two large and handsome volumes, which reflected, as all the reviewers hastened to acknowledge, great credit on the House—especially on the enterprise of the House. Some reviewers went so far as to ask how, in the case of a book on which so large a capital must have been embarked, the Authors' Society persisted in underrating the risks incurred by publishers. This enterprise, however, was not quite what the world supposed. For the enterprising House had made the author guarantee the sum of £400. He thought it meant the difference, if any, between the sales and £400. But that was not what they meant at all. Nor did the agreement justify him in that reading. They made him actually pay up the £400. So that the enterprising firm got towards the expenses all the illustrations and £400 besides. A nobly enterprising firm, indeed!

The considerations set forth above are surely sufficient to justify the warning never—never—never to bring out a book by commission unless these tricks can be made impossible, and never on any account to listen to the man who wants a writer to pay so much in advance.

It has been publicly stated that I have not practised what I preach—and that in one novel

at least I published by commission. I have, in fact, published three novels on commission, yet not in the way above described.

The circumstances were as follows:—The first novel which I wrote, in collaboration with the late James Rice, appeared in "Once a Week," serially. The story attracted a good deal of attention, and we found that we should save a great deal of money if we gave it to a publisher on commission. We did so, but *not in the ordinary manner.* We printed and bound it at our own risk; we gave it to a publisher on commission: and he got nothing but that simple commission, with which, to do him justice, he was content. Moreover, by arranging with the printers that they should be paid when the first returns came in, we had to pay just nothing at all, because the returns covered the cost and the commission, and left a comfortable sum over. That is an ideal way of publishing, provided your publisher will honestly push the book; that is, will give it the same chance as his own books.

The writer who publishes his book on commission must also remember that notes, insets, quotations in different type, etc., add materially to the expense; that Greek, Arabic, or Hebrew words are inserted at so much a word, and the prefaces and introductions will be charged extra.

An illustration of the latter occurred some years ago. A writer brought this case to the Society of Authors.

A.B. agreed with a publisher to pay so much for the production of his book. He then asked a friend acquainted with the subject, to write an Introduction. The friend did so; he wrote a lengthy Introduction, with many corrections; the publisher said nothing about the extra cost, or that there would be any extra cost, but let him go on until he saw himself able to bring in a bill for the Introduction and corrections equal to all that the author had paid for the cost of the whole book. And there was nothing to be done but to pay. It will be said that the author ought to have known, of course. But authors as a rule know nothing.

3. Risk.

The question of "risk" is one which requires careful consideration, because so much ignorant nonsense is talked about it, and so many misleading statements are constantly advanced on the subject. What, therefore, does risk mean practically?

(i). The production of great works, such as encyclopædias, dictionaries, maps, illustrated art books, may undoubtedly entail the investment of large sums; waiting for the repayment perhaps for many years; and perhaps losing in the long run. Let us, however, separate these works, which are only undertaken by two or three publishers: and let us confine our inquiry to general literature.

(ii). The production of general literature stands on quite a different footing, as the following considerations will show—

(*a*) There are many hundreds of writers, engaged upon every branch of intellectual work, whose works entail no risk whatever. In other words, the experienced publisher knows with these writers how large an edition he can safely order without any loss to himself. This kind of experience was happily illustrated by an account shown to me recently. The author was a well-known writer. The publisher knew beforehand so well what he would sell that he printed one edition which sold out all but twenty copies or so. Once more, remember that there are hundreds of writers of whom this may be said, and that they are all known by publishers in their respective branches.

(*b*) There is another large class of writers of whom it is safe to conclude that their books will at least pay expenses with some margin.

(*c*) There is a practice of "subscribing" a book; that is, offering it to the booksellers of London before it is even printed. The publisher thus gains some idea of the number on which he may venture. Thus, if he arrives at a subscription of 200 copies of such a book among the London booksellers, he may expect as many from the country trade, and so he goes to press with a risk either greatly diminished or wiped out.

(*d*) But publishers reduce the risk a great deal more in various ways.

They bind no more than are wanted.

They do not advertise more than is absolutely necessary; they feel their way. Thus, with a great many books, whose sale is certain to be small, £5 or so covers the advertising bill. They do not mould a book which is not likely to want a second edition. Thus they save £10 or so.

(*e*) But the real way of regarding the actual risk incurred is this. Publishers do not pay the printer and others for a certain time, three to six months. Before that time they have received their returns of the first subscription of the book. *The risk therefore is not, as is generally believed, the cost of production: it is the difference, if any, between the first subscription and the cost of production.*

For instance, the cost of production being £100, and the returns of the first subscription £95, the risk is just £5. And as I have said, publishers know pretty well at the outset what the first subscription will be. These considerations are sufficient to show what risk really means in the production of current general literature, not in great undertakings: it is the difference between the cost of production and the first returns. But a publisher may say that he cannot undertake work without the prospect of such a margin as will pay his office expenses and profit for himself. We have already considered the question of office expenses, which apply to both author and bookseller.

In setting forth these figures and estimates I do not suppose that many of my readers will find themselves in a position at the outset to refuse the terms offered them. I only want them to examine and note very carefully what those terms mean; and if they find that they have been overreached by their publisher; or deceived by false representations, in the various letters, conversations, and agreements about the book, to avoid that publisher for the future, and to let their friends know how they have been treated.

Further, these facts and figures, it must be remembered, though they have been vehemently denied over and over again, are not inventions but actual, *bonâ fide*, working estimates; so that for a publisher to deny them means to write himself down either as a fool or a knave. What other alternative can there be? Because it is absurd to suppose that a publisher, whose whole business is the production of books, cannot find out how to produce them as cheaply, at least, as a man who only produces one now and again.

Chapter IV.

Special Subjects.

Every subject that can be mentioned has its own literature, its own circle of readers, and its own writers of authority.

If the subject is popular it may command a wide circle of readers: thus, a book on gardening, if written by one with a reputation for knowledge of gardening, might command a very extensive circle of readers: a book on the anatomy of the common shrimp might be of the highest value in science, but would certainly address a very limited circle.

Some subjects are of interest so limited that they cannot be published in book form: for them the Transactions of a Learned Society exist. Thus the late Professor Sylvester was said to write mathematical papers which could only be followed by half-a-dozen men in the whole world. They appeared, of course, in a scientific journal.

Technical books must be considered apart

from those of general literature. They require as a rule, two or three different kinds of type: and they require carefully drawn and costly illustrations, with notes and appendices, all of which add to the cost of production.

Books of history are sometimes based on original research, in which case they may be invaluable to the right understanding of institutions and their growth, and yet dull to the general reader and in small demand. The archæologist, or the reader of ancient archives and MSS., rarely possesses a pleasing or an attractive style. Yet the great names of Stubbs, Freeman, Froude, Gardiner, and others show that an historian may conduct original researches and still be attractive, while the names of Green, Bright, and others show that history may be as popular and in as great demand as any books of fiction. If, in fact, a scholar can cultivate or command a pleasing and dramatic style, there is no branch of literature more safe or more delightful. He may count on success of every kind, including reputation and money. It would be interesting to know the conditions on which J. R. Green's extremely popular History was brought out, and how far its success was an adequate reward for the pains and study bestowed upon it. So great are the prizes open to an historian that he must be either an excellent man of business himself or he must be mad not to go to a Literary Agent.

Books of Essays should be carefully safe-

guarded. Nothing is more uncertain than the reception of a book of essays. Most of them have a scanty circulation and appeal to very few readers. But there are so many exceptions that the writer cannot be too careful. The essays of Bacon, Addison, Cowley, Charles Lamb, are immortal. Those of Leigh Hunt, Hazlitt, Arthur Helps, Shirley, still have readers. Those of Louis Stevenson, Augustine Birrell and others, living and dead, ought to encourage the essayist with the hope of a reception equally wide and pleasing. In fact, the essayist has only to possess the charm of manner in order to be popular. In Louis Stevenson the manner is everything: the matter is thin: he is the Montaigne of our age—and like Montaigne he is read with a delight which we cannot accord to serious writers. Therefore the essayist must take care. I have already quoted the case of the publisher who proposed to make the writer guarantee the whole cost with a good margin, and then to put the whole of the profits which might follow into his own pocket.

Books of travel, as a rule, have a very large circulation, but a brief life. The illustrations and maps with which they are adorned give the publisher an additional and most profitable chance of trading on the author's ignorance. Therefore he must be extremely careful with his agreement.

Books on archæological subjects: books on

topography: books on the history of Art: or on the history of the arts, of civilisation, of trade, etc., can hardly be expected to command wide success, because they appeal to an audience confined to students or to experts. These books may be, and frequently are, extremely valuable: each one may occupy a man's whole life and be his one work: each one may be a contribution to the subject of the kind called "epoch making;" but its circulation may be of the smallest. For instance, there is the extremely valuable series of books issued by the Early English Text Society. It is no secret that the services of all who were engaged upon those works, whether as editors or as writers of prefaces, introductions, notes, and glossaries, were given for nothing. This is the most conspicuous illustration that I know of laborious work undertaken and carried through, involving years of labour, without the least hope or thought of other reward than the satisfaction of seeing the work done.

As regards educational books, I cannot do better than refer the reader to the Report of the Sub-Committee appointed by the Authors' Society. It should be studied by every writer in this branch.

Chapter V.

The Choice of a Publisher.

In the preceding chapters I have explained what is meant by the Cost of Production, Trade Price, Risk, Royalties, and Profit-Sharing agreements. It may be thought that I have spoken of the Publisher with undeserved disrespect. My answer is that he has spoken of himself with far greater disrespect than I have ever ventured upon. In the summer of this year (1898) the Committee of the Publishers' Association issued a set of draft agreements in which it was clearly shown that they intended to claim the whole of literary property for themselves as their pretended right. The chorus of general amazement was loud and unanimous. Whether these agreements are eventually withdrawn or modified, or not, they will remain as a proof that nothing that has been said as to the rapacity of publishers as a class *comes anywhere near the truth*, if this committee is representative. Every possible opening for a fresh

claim is eagerly seized upon: all the charges and accounts, according to these agreements, are to be over-stated as a right: percentages of anything the publisher pleases are to be added: all sums of money received are to be treated as belonging to the publisher, less whatever royalties he may choose to give: all rights whatever are to be theirs: they even claim as their own the dramatic and translation rights!! Again, to make the game of "grab" more easy, all percentages, royalties, and commissions are left blank, to be filled up as anyone might please. Taking a moderate estimate, it has been shown that a "half-profit" agreement may mean that the publisher is to have 85 per cent. of the profits, and that even a commission agreement may bring in the same pleasing and honest result.

Now these agreements must have been advanced in the sure and certain knowledge that at present no writer of independence will submit to them, and that no respectable literary agent will allow his clients to accept them. They show, however, the intention of putting forward claims which, although they have no basis of right or equity, may succeed in being accepted by degrees from a class notoriously unbusiness-like: they may be gradually allowed through ignorance: it is the intention by slow degrees of the publishers to make the whole of literary property their own: they have only recently

failed in their attempt to enslave the bookseller: they hope, probably, to succeed in that when they have made the author thus dependent. Then they will become absolute masters of literary property.

It may be observed that should these tactics prove successful, they would most certainly lead to the total destruction of literature. No one who could avoid it would enter upon an occupation of which the whole of the rewards produced by his own hand and his own brain were to be taken from him by a middleman: no one would become, if he could help it, a hack and a drudge for a publisher's shop. The best and brightest minds would no longer be attracted by the profession of letters: poetry, fiction, essays, *belles lettres*—all that is most delightful and most glorious in literature would fall into decay, and with them, one is pleased to think, the grasping publisher himself who had caused this ruin.

At this point it will be well to ask what the publisher does for a book, that he should claim rights in it, or any payment for his services. I desire to recognise to the full all his services, and to acknowledge his right to be paid for every form of service.

Under most terms of agreement, he undertakes the payment of printer, paper-maker, binder, and advertising agent.

This he calls risk. We have seen what his risk means—this inquiry deals only with current

general literature. In the case of hundreds of writers in all branches it is simply nothing. In the case of unknown writers, the difference between the first subscription that the publisher's name can command and the cost of production, generally constitutes the risk. If the publisher's name carries weight with the booksellers, it is probably represented, even in the case of previously unknown writers, by a few pounds. And even this small risk he is most careful not to incur unless the work is very strongly recommended by his reader. One is almost ashamed to insist upon this point—the avoidance, if possible, of risk—because it naturally belongs to business of all kinds. The publisher, however, by constantly parading his so-called risk compels us to dwell upon it.

He then, by means of his clerks, puts the MS. through a perfectly mechanical process of printing and binding and advertising. There is no mystery about it: a boy of fifteen could learn it in a week. When a book is completed he sends his traveller round with it, if he has a traveller. In many cases he does not keep this book in his store—it remains with the binder. He also advertises it.

It is sometimes argued that a publisher brings to the business of advertising special knowledge as to the money that would be spent and the organs likely to be most useful. I have seen many hundreds of accounts in which advertise-

ments largely figured. In some instances I have seen them set out in detail. What is observed? The greatest uncertainty. One man advertises largely; another advertises very little and in very few journals. With the exception that all advertise in the London morning papers, there is a difference so great that it is impossible to admit that experience is of any value, since its results are so divergent. In one case where an enormous item for advertising was presented, the details were demanded and furnished. There was no reason to doubt the charge, unless discounts had been received and not entered in the account. Now this sum was largely made up by advertising in all the little provincial papers, such journals as local people of any note do not take in. The money would seem to have been completely thrown away. Yet this was the result of a publisher's life-long "experience." My own experience is that advertising is always tentative and very often stupid. That is to say, the organs are chosen without regard to their readers, and the money is spent without regard to its usefulness. Of course, when one observes in a magazine, whose circulation is only two or three thousand, a four page advertisement of a publisher's book, that means exchange, or the advertisements of the proprietor which cost nothing, and are probably quite useless, except as a means of besting the author.

Observe that the cases when a publisher pro-

duces a work by an unknown man are rare: he need not produce such a book unless he pleases. For reasons which are obvious the risk of producing new men and doubtful subjects is more often incurred in a young house than an old-established house. The publisher, for such services as he renders, should be paid by a commission just as any other agent or middleman is paid.

But when a publisher gives his traveller books called "his own," that is books on a royalty or a profit-sharing agreement, together with books belonging to the author: since he may get (see p. 192) from the former books 85 per cent. of the profits, and from the latter only from ten to fifteen per cent. commission, which is he most likely to push?

A system of commission publishing is only really practicable when this temptation does not work: that is to say, when a publisher can be found who does nothing else.

The preceding seem to be all the services rendered by the publisher. If there are any more I shall be pleased to acknowledge them and to correct this statement. In return for these services he demands, as we have seen, the power of taking anything he pleases of the proceeds or even the whole. By the "draft agreements" there is nothing to prevent him from taking the whole.

However, the reader, armed with the weapons of the truth, ought now to be in a position to

bring the knowledge of the expert to meet the subtlety of the serpent.

Certain points of caution may be added, however, which may be useful in the choice of a publisher.

(i). Let the writer watch publishers' lists and advertisements. If he finds that several authors of repute, not one only, have continued with one firm, that is a certain definite point in favour of that firm. If he finds that writers of repute have withdrawn after publishing one or two books with that firm, *let him have nothing to do with it.* There can be no surer sign of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not.

(ii). Let him, if possible, go to a publisher recommended by some other writer's personal experience.

(iii). If he is a new writer, and anxious above all things to have the book published, let him get what terms he can, and *note carefully the points, if any, in which he has been plundered.* He will then avoid this firm for the future.

(iv). Let him refuse, absolutely, to pay in advance for the alleged cost of production, or any part of it.

(v). On the other hand, if he can find a good distributing agent, there is a great deal to be said for even a new writer printing and binding for himself, and paying the difference, if any, after the first run.

(vi). If he is not a new writer, but one of

some reputation, let him go to a firm supposed to be respectable, and offer him his book on an agreement, drawn by himself, and revised by the Society of Authors. If the book is going to have a run, *i.e.*, if "there is money in it," the book will certainly be taken on such an agreement, which the Secretary will take care to make reasonable.

(vii). The chief dangers to guard against are—(1). The power of making secret profits. (2). The power of charging for advertisements which cost nothing, as exchanges and advertisements in the publishers' own organs. (3). A clear understanding of what the agreement in case of success, great or small, will give the publisher and what it will give the writer.

(viii). As regards the proper proportion of shares, no rule can be laid down; nothing can be actually defined as equitable. If one has to regard the publisher as incurring risk, it would be well to allow him to take the money he has risked with interest on the time during which it had been employed, from the first returns of the book. Thus, if the first subscription is more than the cost of production, he has risked nothing and invested nothing. If the first returns are less he has risked that difference. If it be argued that there must be risk with a new writer, because no one knows how he will go; the answer is that a publisher of standing knows very well that his own name and recommendation

are worth something, at least on the first subscription. And that he takes what risk there is, in such a case, with his eyes open.

Where no risk is incurred, I do not think, for my own part, that the publisher ought to take more than one third of the real profits: and I am quite certain that there ought to be no percentages for office expenses, or for discounts, or for anything else.

In the case of a writer of any reputation, let him go to a literary agent, but only to one recommended after personal experience.

Chapter VI.

Dishonesty and Fraud.

We have shown how in a profit-sharing system: in a royalty method: in publishing on commission the author may be worsted; or overreached; or bested; how the publisher may either trade upon his ignorance or may claim to take whatever he pleases in accordance with the views of the Publishers' Association.

That there have been fraud and falsehood habitually and regularly committed has been long known, and has recently been proved in many ways.

1. The exposure of the real figures, and an examination of the figures presented, shows that the accounts have been very commonly "cooked."

2. The extreme wrath of certain publishers at the disclosure of the figures can only be explained on the theory of dishonesty.

3. The repeated denials of the accuracy of these figures which were simply unaltered printers' and bookbinders' estimates is another

proof of dishonesty. Lastly, in their draft agreements the Publishers' Association have now actually claimed the right to do the very things they have been charged with doing, and this, after affecting the greatest indignation that "sweeping" charges had been brought against their body. What does this prove ?

But we need not regard either claim or repudiation—the fact remains that if any body of men, rich or poor, are allowed the power of cheating, cooking accounts, overstating charges, or of inventing charges with impunity, they will cheat, cook accounts, overstate charges, and invent charges. That is, most of them will. And I have no hesitation whatever in alleging as a simple fact that has been brought home to me by ten or twelve years of investigation into the commercial side of Literature, that many publishers, *including some of the great houses*, have made it their common practice to take secret percentages on the cost of every item : to charge advertisements which they have not paid for : and in this manner to take from the proceeds of the book very much more than they were entitled to do by the agreement.

Some have tried to soothe the reproaches of an outraged conscience by pretending "custom of the trade." Why, then, is the practice secret ? A "custom of the trade" is a thing known and recognised by both parties to a bargain. This is, of course, nonsense. They know, and they must know, that they are THIEVING.

Now they have been enabled to take their secret profits, first, by the ignorance of the class whom they deceive: and secondly by the pernicious and foolish custom on the part of authors of accepting their accounts without audit or examination.

We have cleared away the first barrier to the light. We must now clear away the second which has come by the issue of these draft agreements equally impartial.

Observe that no honest man can possibly object to the free examination of his books by his partner or co-venturer. To do so writes a man down as a rogue. This fact furnishes a most simple test for any publisher. If he objects to his partner seeing and auditing the account, it must be with intent to cheat, or with the guilty consciousness of having cheated.

The right of audit in every partnership, or quasi-partnership, as is involved in a profit-sharing agreement, is not a thing to be extorted and demanded. *It already exists.* It is a right by common law. If a publisher were to deny the right of audit, a court of law would compel him to produce all his books and to prove every item.

In a profit-sharing agreement the publisher can be called upon to prove the bills for printing, paper, and binding, the monies paid for advertisements, the number of copies received from the printer, including what is sometimes a con-

siderable item, the "overs" (*i.e.*, when a thousand copies are ordered, the machine runs on generally for a few more copies, some of which are used to make up deficient or spoiled copies, while the rest are sent to the publishers). He can be called upon to show the number sold, and to prove the amount received on account. As regards the advertisements, he can be called upon to show what money he has actually paid: to charge that sum, and no more. There are firms which make large secret profits by advertising their own books in their own organs and by charging for them. That they also charge for exchanges for which they pay nothing is not, therefore, surprising. Now to claim the right of doing this is in reality to claim the right of sweeping the whole profits into their own pockets.

For example, the sale of a book results in a profit of £50. The firm has two magazines. By giving the book advertisements to the extent of £25 in each, the whole profit goes into the publishers' pockets. But the advertisement increases the sale of the book! Does it? When the magazine has a sale of many thousands this may be the case: when it has a small sale only, it is very doubtful whether an advertisement of any kind in it can do the thing advertised the least good.

I heard recently of a firm which held out as a distinct advantage offered by them to their authors, that they only charged half the

usual tariff for advertisements in their own magazines. Generous, noble-hearted souls! The authors, they trust, are too silly to see that they have no right to charge anything for the use of their office and their machinery—and that, whatever they charge, they keep the right, as shown above, of taking as much of the profits as they please.

Again, under a Royalty system, what check is there on the returns? Nothing but an audit. Thus we must learn:—

(i). The number ordered of the printer.
(ii). The number delivered to the binder.
(iii). The number sold by the publisher.
(iv). The number left.

The only possible way of securing honesty is by making dishonesty dangerous and difficult. The best way to effect this is by calling for an audit on every return. The way must be led by authors of position. As soon as they can be persuaded to take the trouble, and go to the very small expense of sending an auditor, the chief danger of dishonesty will be removed, because it will then become necessary to have accomplices in fraud among the clerks—a very perilous position.

I have used the words dishonesty and fraud freely, because it is as well to call things by their right names. At the same time I have been told by a counsel, learned in the law, that it is not certain that a publisher who spends £90, and puts down

£120, could be tried at the Old Bailey. However, in the year 1897, such a case was tried at the Court of Cassation in Paris, when the following judgment was pronounced:—

"When, in the carrying out of a contract between publisher and author, the publisher, in order to increase his profits, and reduce those of the author, renders accounts which dissimulate the real numbers of copies in the editions, and at the same time falsifies his books to make them agree with the accounts rendered, this combination of fraud and falsification presents the character of the crimes of forgery and of the employment of forged documents."

A method of providing books with stamps which shall be a check upon dishonesty, has been proposed by various persons. My late friend, Prof. Frederick Guthrie, F.R.S., once elaborated a method of putting the author's stamp on every book sold. Mr. Pearsall Smith also proposed a stamp in the case of American editions. And I am informed that such a system has lately been advocated by Mr. H. Southam.

The idea is very simple. The author is to issue so many stamps. One is placed in every book that leaves the publisher's hands. The publisher is bound by his agreement not to send out a single copy without the stamp. At first the public would not notice whether the stamp was there or not, but they would soon learn to expect it, just as they now expect the omnibus

conductor to give them a ticket and to click his tin box. If he did not do so, the people in the omnibus would know that he was defrauding the company. The method certainly has advantages. It would give some trouble, but not much: the rest might be recognised by a small drawback in the royalties of every hundred copies—one boy could certainly stamp many thousands of volumes in a week.

The danger seems to lie in the possible imitation of the stamp which must be different for each author. Such a forgery, however, would be too barefaced and would require confederates. A publisher's face might lengthen at having to use the stamp: he would openly bewail the sad lack of confidence between man and man: he would go to church oftener in order to show his profound honesty, but he would not forge: it is a thing too dangerous. We have not yet been able to convict a publisher in a criminal court for falsifying his accounts, however much we know that he has done so: until this event happens he may go on falsifying his accounts; but he would not commit forgery. There, if you please, the good man's fears would draw the line.

Chapter VII.

The Method of the Future.

When a book is printed and bound and advertised, the publisher says that he has published it.

Not at all: he has only printed and bound and advertised it. Its publication remains still to be performed.

The publication of a book is not only its production, but also its exhibition for sale. It is not published unless it is offered to the public. The bookseller, in fact, completes the publication. The publisher offers it for sale to the booksellers. In another chapter I speak of the bookseller's present position. At present it is sufficient to state that out of the enormous number of books produced, not the most wealthy bookseller can afford to stock more than a very small proportion. What becomes of all the rest? They are not published at all; or they are most imperfectly published. Hundreds of books are produced every year which are never offered to the public for sale, or are offered only by a very

few booksellers. A certain number are taken by the circulating libraries, but, of unknown writers, very few. The rest are never heard of or seen: they have no chance. Go to the nearest bookseller and look round his shelves. How many of this year's new books do you see? Ask for one. There is always the same reply: "We have not got it in stock, but we can get it for you."

We have seen the claims set up by the publishers in every form of publishing: we have seen also the unlimited nature of these claims because the percentages are left open. It is clear, therefore, that the methods of the future, unless they are to reduce the writer to mere slavery, must include freedom from those publishers who endorse and put forward these pretensions. They must also include a very marked improvement in the position of the bookseller.

Briefly, therefore, the method will be this.

The author will dissever himself altogether from the publisher, and will connect himself directly with the bookseller and the libraries. He will appoint an agent or distributor, to whom he will pay a commission. He will take upon himself the printing and production and advertising. He will himself incur the risk, if any, of a loss on the first run of the book.

This is the simple method of the future. We will now compare the results of the old methods with the results which will be obtained by the method of the future.

One thing only is necessary, an agent who will work the books honestly and with zeal, and *will not publish in any other manner than for the author.*

The latter will thus save, to begin with, all the percentages and charges which the publisher claims the right of putting into the account.

Let us, however, state a case. I would put algebraical symbols instead of figures, so as to show the proportion, but perhaps they would not be generally understood.

Suppose, therefore, that the whole cost of the book has been £150, and that the returns are £400, or a sale of about 2,400 copies, less presentation copies, or 2,340 for author's royalty. Let us see what the author would receive on a half-profit system; a 15 per cent. royalty; by giving a 15 per cent. commission to an ordinary publisher; or, lastly, by this method.

(i). A half profit system.

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Cost of production ...	150	0	0
Swelled by secret percentages, advertisements not paid, etc.	45	0	0
By "incidental expenses" not explained	5	0	0
Author's share of profits	70	0	0
Publisher's „ „	70	0	0
	£340	0	0

	£	*s.*	*d.*
By sales	400	0	0
Less 5 per cent. for bad debts, and 10 per cent. for office expenses ...	60	0	0*
	£340	0	0

(ii). Royalty to author of 15 per cent.

By sales, 2,400 producing at 15 per cent. on 6/-, reckoning 13 as 12, £97.

(iii). By commission, giving the publisher 15 per cent.

	£	*s.*	*d.*		£	*s.*	*d.*
Cost, as above	150	0	0	By Sales...	400	0	0
Advertisements (secret) ...	45	0	0	Less deductions as before	60	0	0
Publisher's com.	51	0	0				
"Incidental expenses" ...	5	0	0				
Author ...	89	0	0				
	£340	0	0		£340	0	0

* Are there no bad debts? Yes. But the publisher's accounts are made up a year after the first run of the book. Suppose he enters, which I believe to be the case, just the money actually received. To subtract for bad debts then is to reckon them twice over.

(iv). On the new method.

	£ *s.* *d.*		£ *s.* *d.*
Cost of production ...	150 0 0	By Sales ...	400 0 0
Agent's Com...	40 0 0		
Author ...	210 0 0		
	£400 0 0		£400 0 0

In a word, there is the sum of £250 to be divided between author (to whom the estate belongs) and publisher.

First method. The publisher receives £180 and the author £70.

Second method. The publisher receives £153 and the author £97.

Third method. The publisher receives £161 and the author £89.

By the last method the agent receives £40 and the author £210.

But will the book sell as well? Quite as well. The experiment has been tried and it has succeeded. Quite as well. The public care nothing about publishers' names. The bookseller gets the book more cheaply, and by other means, which I am not allowed to explain, is placed in a better position to offer the book than by the old method of dealing.

All that is wanted is an agent, or a publisher, who will deal with none but commission books, who will take his commission, and no more: and

who will produce none but books which are certain to be taken up by the public.

I call this *The Method of the Future*, and I advance this prophecy with confidence, because after many years of hope against hope I find no other solution of the difficulties possible. We have asked of the publishers, vainly, for fourteen years, one or two simple concessions involving bare honesty. One of these is that we are to know what share of our property goes to them by any agreement. Another is open books with the right of audit—we have that right, but the exercise of it is met with the bitterest hostility. A third is that nothing shall be charged that is not paid for. They have maintained a steady silence. They have scornfully turned a deaf ear to the perfectly reasonable demands of the very people by whom they live. Their last act (in their "draft agreements") has been to demand the right—as their right—to take for themselves whatever they please—to overcharge what they please—to give the author—owner and creator of the property—only what they please. The one idea of the publisher is to make the bookseller his slave and to take from the author all but a wretched dole of his own property.

It is, then, worse than useless: it is inconsistent with self-respect, to go on repeating these demands. Since we cannot obtain even a contemptuous consideration of our claims, we must cease to repeat them: we must go elsewhere, and

take the management of our property into our own hands. "If," said a great bookseller to me once, "if authors would only do this, they would be amazed by the result."

Will this method do away with the necessity for a Literary Agent? Certainly not. In the case of novels, the volume form is generally only one stage. In the case of other books, the author will be as little able to manage the printing of his book as he has always been unable to manage any part of his affairs. The Agent will put his book through the press for him; receive his money; and keep the distributor provided with copies of his book.

BOOK III.

Chapter I.—The Literary Agent.

We now know the nature of the claims advanced by the Committee of the Publishers' Association in their draft agreements. They claim to repeat nothing short of the power of seizing upon the whole of literary property—the whole of it: of course, they will not be allowed to do so, but how should the author protect himself? This book and the publications of the Society of Authors should enable him to know at least the nature of his property: the truth about the administration of literary property, and the meaning of any claims that will be made upon him. If he is a strong man, and one who has plenty of time he will protect himself by sending in an agreement of his own. Probably he is not conversant with figures and is not strong, and has no time to spare. In that case there is but one thing for him to do. It is not to put himself into the hands of a solicitor, because literary property is a thing of which

solicitors, with one or two exceptions, know nothing. He must put himself into the hands of a Literary Agent, who will manage his affairs for him on a commission.

The Literary Agent has now become almost indispensable for the author of every kind, but especially for the novelist. For he knows, not only the way to protect his client against publishers, but he knows, as well, the requirements of the periodicals—those which want articles and serials: those which are filled up: those that will be open at certain dates: the same kind of wants and openings in America: the way to secure copyright in America: and all the other various and separate rights of the author, whatever they are.

Some writers do not like the idea of paying a commission of ten per cent. to an agent. But if their own work is doubled and trebled in value: if they are kept free from the constant irritation and suspicion created by dealing directly with publishers: if they are kept free, also, from pecuniary worries, and find that their only business trouble is to accept or refuse; if they are left to do their own literary work without any consideration of the commercial value: and if the Literary Agent does all this for them, surely he is dirt cheap at ten per cent.

The publisher, however (in his draft agreements), claims for himself all rights. He leaves no place for the Agent: he will relieve the

author of all doubts and anxieties by taking everything. He wants serial right: translation right: dramatic right: colonial right: continental right: volume right—all. The Literary Agent perhaps allows him to purchase these rights, not altogether, but one by one: or reserves each for separate arrangement with other firms. As for dramatic rights, he does not allow the publisher to purchase them at all.

Here is an instance of what an agent may do for a client. Some time ago, a publishing house offered a novelist £120 for all rights—every right—in his new story: it was a religious house: the heart of the secretary throbs and thrills with the purest and holiest religion. The author refused, and put the work in the hands of an agent. He received (i) £250 for his English serial right: £100 for his American right: a royalty of 20 per cent. here, and of 15 per cent. in America for the volume right: and a certain sum for his continental right—was it not worth the while of this man to go to an agent, or, at least, to become a member of the Society of Authors, which has enabled such things to become possible? In all probability he would not by himself have time to negotiate his separate rights: nor would he know how to secure his American and other rights.

Great care must be taken in employing an agent. There are many who profess themselves agents. I know of two literary agents whom I

am prepared from my own experience to recommend, both for probity and knowledge. I have heard of literary agents actually and secretly receiving money from publishers for bringing them authors, which is exactly the same as if a solicitor took money from the other side. Nothing could be baser than this breach of trust. And there is no doubt that bribes are offered to any agent who is thought capable of being corrupted. At the same time, the bribe, in the case of a good writer, must be great, in order to induce him to make lower terms than he would otherwise grant.

For instance. There might be a question between a royalty of 22 and one of 25 per cent. in the case of a popular author. Let us see how this would work out.

In the case of a sale of 10,000 of a 6/- book the author on the first royalty would receive £660 and the agent £66. In the latter royalty the author would receive £750 and the agent £75. If the agent was dishonest he might accept, we will say, the lower royalty on a bribe of £50, which would still leave the publisher £40 extra profit on the job.

There is, however, one safeguard. If these things are done, they are found out, sooner or later. There is not any kind of business which requires fuller confidence of integrity than that of the literary agent. One such trick discovered would ruin him for ever.

The question arises whether an agent can do

anything for a young writer, or for a writer who wishes to produce a single book on his own subject. As regards the former, I am in some doubt. I do not think that, as a rule, the agent can do very much for a first book, *i.e.*, a first novel. The writer will probably get little or nothing by it except, what is certainly of the highest importance to him, his first appearance before the public. He gets his chance. If his first venture is not largely circulated—it is not often that a first book is a great success—he may get talked about and so the way be prepared for future work. There are first books which turn out to be veritable gold mines, but they are very much the exception. Let the writer, therefore, who has done well with his first novel, take his second to an agent. I have, however, heard of cases in which an agent has placed a first novel on advantageous terms.

As regards the placing of articles in magazines I cannot understand that a young writer, a writer with no reputation, can be helped in the least by a literary agent. All he has to do is to offer his MS. to be read by the editor. An agent can do no more. In the case of papers by well-known writers, of course, that is quite different. The agent can make special terms for them, and can thus greatly improve their position.

For the specialist, the literary agent ought to prove highly useful: he can protect him from a bad agreement and he knows where to take the

book for a good agreement. There are publishers to whom an agent will never go unless his client wishes it. If you want to know who they are, wait till you hear them talk about the literary agent. They cannot hold their tongues: about once in six months they plunge into the papers with a shriek. Then pick out the most violent, and set him down as the most deeply injured, and as the most dishonest. The writer of educational and scientific books has hardly as yet begun to go to the Literary Agent: partly because he has not yet realized how he is *exploité:* partly because he does not like the thought of paying commission: partly because he does not believe that an agent can help him: and partly because he cannot be got to believe in the disclosures made by the Society of Authors. Always his publisher whispers, perhaps over a bottle of champagne, that the statements of the Society are all lies.

Sometimes, it is true, but not so often as he should, the scientific writer or the educational writer sends his agreement to the Society of Authors for examination. Even then he does not always take the advice which he receives.

Now the Literary Agent goes with his own agreement in his hand and offers it to be taken or refused. This attitude reverses the ordinary conditions of things and presents the author as an independent person offering employment on stated conditions to the publisher. The other arrangement, which we wish to reverse, makes the publisher offer employment to the author.

The bitter hostility with which the literary agent is regarded by the publisher abundantly proves to those who know anything the advantage of employing the agent. Else why this virulent animosity?

The genesis of the agent is as follows:—

The Society of Authors, with great pains, has investigated, discovered, and published the whole meaning of publishing, viz.: The cost of composition, printing, paper, corrections, binding, moulding, and stereotyping; the amount generally expended in advertising; the price exacted by the trade; the more common tricks practised with impunity upon authors; the barefaced overcharges which men who wish to be regarded as honourable have tried to persuade themselves were honourable. All this knowledge had been most carefully hidden away and kept dark up to that time. The Literary Agent then appeared on the scene. Some of us wanted him to become a part of the Society of Authors, but at the time the society was not strong enough to make that a safe position. He is, therefore, independent. Armed, however, as he now is with a full knowledge of the whole business of production and sale, he has been able to meet the publisher, for the first time, on an equal footing. It is now one business man with another: *and one knows as much as the other:* it is the introduction into the publishing trade of that open competition which belongs to other trades.

It may be objected that this information is in the hands of all writers who choose to read it. That is true: but it is, with most writers, one thing to read about it and another thing to act upon it, particularly when a publisher assures him with a serious and even a religious and christian air, that the figures of the society are utterly false, or wholly misleading, or contemptibly impossible—an assurance which is very solemnly offered to credulous writers every day in certain publishers' offices.

Now all the figures given in the *Author* are actual figures taken from printers' estimates, etc. How have they been met by publishers? Three or four instances will suffice.

1. One person wrote to the *Athenæum*, boldly stating that he could not produce books at the figures proffered by the society.

I was then chairman, and I replied offering to do all his printing on those terms. He said no more.

2. Another person, writing to deny the correctness of our figures, calmly added two sheets to the estimate. This, of course, did the trick, until he was exposed.

3. Another ingenious gentleman wrote offering certain figures which he invented, as the trade terms. His firm *the very same day* sent out a "private and confidential" circular, of which a copy was at once sent to me, informing booksellers that they could not have books on

the terms quoted by their partner. Of course, I exposed this person publicly, and the ingenious one had nothing to say.

4. A fourth person laid it down as a principle that certain books *must* be of a certain length. With this proviso, which was easily proved to be quite unfounded, he triumphantly proved that our figures were quite wrong.

I was able, in fact, to show at once by cases adduced, that his law of length did not exist, and therefore his "proof" was bowled over.

He then added that I had made a certain statement in the *Author*, which I had repeated, he said, without the slightest qualification. I asked him to give me the references to these passages. Then came shuffling. First, he said he was out of town; then he said that he did not like being addressed by a solicitor; then he shuffled a second time; then he shuffled a third time; then he shuffled off and on for six months; then I placed the matter in the hands of the committee of the society, and at last he refused to give those references, thereby allowing it to be understood that he had invented that passage and that repetition "without the slightest qualification."

Now an ordinary writer calls upon a publisher and hears all these allegations: he knows nothing about the figures or the practices connected with them: he cannot believe that the polite person, in the arm chair, who belongs perhaps to a White Lily League, or a Dolls' Hospital, or an

Anti-Vivisection Society, or the Brick Lane Branch of the National Temperance Association, is lying: he thinks the Society of Authors must have wickedly invented those figures: he gives way: he signs whatever he is told to sign and he goes away, having ignorantly placed the whole of his literary property in the power of a person who means to have it all.

The Literary Agent acts differently. The publisher knows that it is no use trying on little tricks about figures with him. They are two men of business talking together in an office: the matter is approached solely from a business point of view. There is no champagne. When the Literary Agent comes away, either the interests of his client safeguarded or the book is in his pocket still, to be taken elsewhere. For these reasons I recommend most strongly the employment of a Literary Agent in the conduct of an author's business.

Chapter II.

In Search of an Editor.

In this part of my work I suppose that the reader has already produced a MS. which he is anxious to see published, and that he desires to submit this work first to some editor for appearance in his magazine or journal.

I. Let him put out of his mind absolutely the idea that any editor is open to "influence." I have myself written for most of the leading magazines, and I have made the acquaintance of most of the editors. I do not, however, know a single editor whom I would dare to attempt to "influence."

Yet I constantly receive letters from young writers, begging me to use my "powerful influence"—it is always put in this gratifying, if mistaken, manner—to get their work accepted.

Consider the position. An editor is placed in charge of a magazine, whose interests he is pledged to advance by every means in his power. If he were to allow himself to be moved by private influence, he would simply betray his trust.

There is but one way to approach an editor, and that is by offering him good work. If the paper suits his columns and is above the average, he will certainly take it: if it suits the talk and mood of the day and is equal to his average, he will certainly take it: if it is of doubtful interest and not above the average of his paper, he will hesitate about taking it.

If these facts are duly kept in mind, they will perhaps prevent a good deal of disappointment. Nothing is more common among people whose work has been proffered and declined than to attribute their failure to lack of influence.

II. There are many complaints against editors: they are said to keep MSS. too long: they send them back in a soiled condition: they lose them: they refuse to pay until a County Court summons is threatened, and then they pay a wretched fee. All these complaints are well founded, but only as concerns a certain low class of editor: they have been published, with many more, in the columns of the *Author*. The reader may, however, take courage, because these complaints, although they are literally true and matters of fact, are for the most part true only of low class struggling journals whose proprietors seem to be capable of any meanness. These people, in fact, do not return MSS.: they keep them and put them in when they are probably forgotten: they do not pay until they are obliged: they lose MSS.: they spill beer over them. But

a writer may generally assume that with the better class periodicals, though he may be offered less than he anticipated, he will be treated with courtesy and will have his MS. returned to him if it is not used, provided he falls in with the rules of the magazine as announced with every issue.

III.—How then is the writer to make choice of the most likely magazine? He must first consider what magazine would best suit his subject. If it is an article on a solid subject: a work of reasoning and argument: a work of historical research: a serious critical paper: he should send it to one of the three or four leading monthly magazines.* If it is a light social paper, or an essay on contemporary manners, or an account of some journey, or a chapter of biography, there is a choice among the shilling, sixpenny, and threepenny magazines, or even the penny weeklies. If it is a short story, there are all the magazines from a shilling down to a penny open to him. If he sends it to one of the latter, let him avoid the struggling papers, and go straight to those of the largest circulation.

IV.—Then comes a very important point—that of length. It is obvious that where it is the practice to devote four columns to a particular kind of article—a story, or essay, or adventure—it is suicidal to send in a paper of six columns.

* These are the *Nineteenth Century*, the *Contemporary*, the *Fortnightly*, and the *National*.

"But," says Inexperience, "the editor can cut it down." My friend, the editor cannot waste his time in the correction of contributions. Find the average length in the journal you select, of such a paper as you have written, and be careful not to exceed that length. Thus in *Longman's Magazine* for August, I find that the current serial story occupies twenty-six pages or 13,000 words: a paper on "Locusts" takes nine pages or 4,500 words: a short story, thirteen pages or 6,500 words: a talk over an old book, nine pages or 4,500 words: another story, nine pages or 4,500 words: an historical paper in fifteen pages or 7,800 words: another story, six pages or 3,000 words.

These details should be instructive. They show the aspirant what he may consider a fair length for his own article if he is submitting it to the editor of *Longman's*: about the same length will serve for all the monthly magazines. If, however, he attempts a weekly paper he must get one or two, and make a similar list of the length of papers -perhaps *Chambers' Journal* would be as good as any for this purpose.

V. One would advise next a clear handwriting and a fair copy free of corrections. If he can get it type-written, so much the better.

VI. A copy should be kept in case the one sent is not returned. Before sending it to another paper, write to the editor of the first and state politely your intention of doing so unless he has

been able to accept it. Then he cannot complain of discourtesy. Stamps for return must be sent with the copy. It has been argued that the editor ought to pay the postage. Without going into this controversy I would remark that the editor's answer to such a claim is severely practical. He will not send back the MS. unless the postage is paid. When that is done, he will send it back leaving his contributors to argue among themselves on the abstract question of right as regards the postage of stamps. He is, you see, the master of the situation.

VII. When a writer has obtained some reputation, and not till then, he will be justified in attempting to make his own terms with an editor. A beginner must remember that the editor gives him what he wants most—an Introduction.

VIII. Let the young writer remember that every journal has its own *clientèle:* that his best chance is to make friends in as many papers as possible: so that he should not put all his eggs into one basket.

IX. Let him be careful always to sign his name. It is the only way to become known and to become popular. If editors refuse him this right, let him cast about for another editor who will allow it. But it is seldom refused.

X. A very common mistake is for the young writer to send in a MS. unfinished or uncorrected. intimating that he will correct it in any way indicated by the editor. The editor has no time to

indicate, or to correct, or to revise. He must have everything sent to him finished and polished, and corrected, and ready for publication.

XI. The question of pay and the rate of pay is very difficult to answer. There is no fixed rate of pay with many journals. With others, a guinea a page, the page varying from 500 to 1,000 words, is a common sum to offer. There are special terms made with authors whose name carries weight, but with these we have nothing to do. For a short story of two or three columns in a weekly, the author may expect as many guineas and sometimes will have to take less. The writer who is beginning will do well to make no demur at anything that may be offered at the outset. He will accept everything, and will simply make a note that such a journal, since it pays at so low a rate, must be avoided for the future, while the fact that his work has been already accepted will do him a certain amount of good in offering his next paper to another journal.

XII. I have already spoken of what is wanted in general terms. Whatever the writer works at, both his subject and his treatment should be attractive: that is the first rule. If he works at fiction, let his stories be dramatic and his style pleasing. There are writers who carry off a lack of dramatic interest by their charm of writing—but they are rare—let the young novelist aim at dramatic effects.

XIII. As a last rule, which is a repetition.

Above all things, do not at first try to live by writing for the magazines and journals. Let them be a help, but not a means of livelihood, if you value your reputation, your independence, and your self-respect.

Chapter III.

Journalism.*

The openness of the profession of Journalism gives it a peculiar charm for certain young men with brains and spirit. Anyone who can readily put pen to paper, and who has some perception of what manner of things his fellows will be interested to hear of and to read, commands at once, as it seems, a facile avenue up which he may amble or even dart to fame and fortune. It is an attractive conception, and largely a misleading one. In no respect is it less true than as regards the fortune. There are several wealthy proprietors of journals in London, but no rich journalists.

Not the least remarkable condition of the journalist's career is the obscurity in which he carries on his work. There is no other large body of

* (The following pages are written by a professional journalist. They are designed to show what the profession of journalism means: what is the method of conducting a daily paper: the different kinds of work open to a journalist, and other subjects which may be helpful to the candidate.)

workers about whom so little is known to the general community. People read newspapers, and could not exist without them, but the reader seldom reflects that there is any other source for these publications beyond the newsagent's counter. This state of affairs is the natural result of the traditional practice of Anonymity in the Newspaper Press. The writer of newspapers has always been to the reader an impalpable force, unidentified in any single individuality or group of individualities, and even surrounded by a glamour of mystery. Even now, however, this unnatural indifference to the writers is in process of a noticeable change, as the result of a growing individualist movement on the part of a few of themselves ; and it is not unusual to hear a journalist discussed over a City luncheon table or in a West-end drawing-room.

Let us visit the office of a London "daily morning." If one of what newspapers call "the general public" happens to visit in daytime the office of a morning paper, he is puzzled at the air of complete desertion which the place wears. He wonders how an establishment manages to preserve such a quiet exterior even up to six o'clock in the evening, and yet gives him at eight on the following morning the whole of the day's news ; collected by an immense variety of hands ; printed carefully with the view of training him to look on a certain page for the market intelligence, on another for the foreign telegrams ; and

on a third for the editorial criticisms of the world's proceedings. All this has been done while he was enjoying a quiet evening at home, or was at the play, and even while he slept. The advertisement-receiving business of such a newspaper is carried on, of course, all through the day, up to seven o'clock, but this is quite apart, and not till six does the first of the editorial staff begin to arrive at the office. The editor himself, however, generally the most hard-worked as well as the supremely responsible member, has already been engaged for an hour or two. He receives callers by appointment in the afternoon, and with his secretary goes through the day's correspondence. The people who write to editors are of all classes, from the cabinet minister to the carter, and the requests that he receives are of infinite variety.

A hundred subjects crop up in the postbag, and before he goes off to dinner the editor has also to see the diary for the day's events, settle as far as can be done at that early hour what the subjects of the night's leading articles are to be, discuss a political question with a leader-writer whom he has summoned to see him specially, and leave instructions for other leader-writers as to the work they are to take up when they arrive at the office at ten o'clock. Just before he leaves at seven the editor receives from the chief sub-editor, whose staff is by this time at work opening and dealing with reports, a

statement of the number of columns the advertisements will occupy, and the editor notifies the "sub." of any special articles that are expected, and for which space must be allowed in the measurement. If the advertisements, speeches, etc., are very heavy, the editor decides that the paper must be larger than usual, a ten-page or a twelve-page issue, a point of great importance, as it involves an extra expenditure of perhaps £60. Having dined at home or at his club, the editor returns to the office at half-past ten, when everyone is in the thickest of the work. Messengers are passing into the various rooms with proofs from the printer, the editor receiving proofs of everything, each sub-editor, those with which he is concerned, and the leader-writer a proof of the speech or item of news upon which his article is to be founded. Eight or a dozen reporters, whose work has been apportioned on the previous night by the chief reporter,—this engagement to the one who knows ecclesiastical matters particularly well, another to the reporter who knows scientific affairs, and so on —soon have returned from their engagements, and are writing up their "copy," which is then handed over to the sub-editors. There may be six, eight, or more sub-editors, and their work consists of going through all the "copy" that comes in by hand and telegraph from reporters in town or country, striking out superfluous phrases here and mischievous or possibly libel-

ous statements there, and sending the material by a slide or lift to the printing department, marked with instructions as to the kind of type it is to be set in. In a well-regulated office each sub-editor has his own department of news to look after. When the report of a police-case arrives, the chief sub-editor passes it on to that one of his men whose special charge is the police-reports. As each batch of the "copy" of a long political speech is delivered at the office by a telegraph boy, it is handed by the chief to another sub-editor, or (if the hour is late) is is distributed among several, in order that it may be punctuated and given to the printer without any loss of time. A labour report goes to one sub-editor, a cricket or racing meeting is dealt with by another, a law report by a third; and from half-past six to two o'clock the sub-editors' room is a scene of constant but silent activity. In another room the foreign sub-editor is receiving despatches from all parts of the world. Some are from Reuter's agents, others from the Central News agents, and still others from Dalziel's agents, but greatest prominence is given to despatches from the paper's own correspondents, as these telegrams are exclusive to it while the agency telegrams are sent to every newspaper which orders and pays for them. Special correspondence is more costly, but most of the London morning papers have correspondents of their own in the capitals of Europe and in New York,

while *The Times* covers the whole world with highly-qualified men. How important a service of exclusive information may be to a newspaper was exemplified in the first half of the year 1898 in the case of the telegrams sent by Mr. George A. Morrison, its Peking correspondent, which enabled *The Times* to acquaint the world with the Russo-Chinese negotiations affecting our interests at the Chinese Court before the British Government itself knew of them. In another room of the editorial office, or in several, are the leader writers, perhaps writing against time and with the printer's boy on the carpet asking for more copy. All through the night the editor and the associate-editor are being applied to on a thousand points; the printer sending down page after page of the paper for his inspection before it goes into the foundry to be cast; the leader-writer waiting for instructions; the proof-reader with a particular query which nobody but the editor himself can settle; and a messenger announcing that a personage has called with most important information relating to South Africa, for which he wants a good price as well as a guarantee of secrecy as to the source. The drafting of the contents-bill, which comes on as midnight approaches, is in some offices done by a subordinate, but it is often done by the editor himself, and the latter arrangement is preferable, for no one appreciates so exactly as the editor the selling value of a line on the bill, or distinguishes so

clearly what items of the day's contents are likely to "draw" the public. Further on, the literary editor is turning over the day's books in the seclusion of his own chamber, assigning each that he judges worthy of notice to its reviewer, with possibly a word of instruction as to space if the reviewer is known to be loquacious, but without any instruction at all in most cases. An assistant takes charge of these books, keeps a record of each as it is sent out, and passes them on to the despatch department.

The literary department of the newspaper is a modern growth and a most remarkable one. To *The Daily Chronicle*, under the editorship of Mr. A. E. Fletcher, belongs the credit of being the first to inaugurate a distinct department for the daily review of books—a departure which was, perhaps, looked upon rather jealously by the exclusively literary organs. These papers, however, are happily strong enough to have large publics of their own. Other morning journals followed the lead of *The Chronicle*, and gave increased attention to the literary side, without which no paper is to-day "possible."

In the London press, as a whole, the reviewing is well done, and singularly free from malice. A reviewer of many years' standing, who has in his time reviewed works for a number of papers, told the writer that he never received from any editor a hint as to how a book should be reviewed—favourably or otherwise. The literary

movement is an active force in the provinces also. It must be remembered, however, that publishers of books court reviews on any terms. Whether the reviewer expresses himself as well or ill impressed by a book, or as not impressed at all, does not greatly matter, so long as it has secured the publicity of being reviewed. In other words it is recognised that reviews do undoubtedly influence readers, and must have an effect on the sale of books. Reviewers are only in a few cases all-round journalists; they are a class by themselves, many of them purely critics, others themselves authors as well as critics.

A man does not always enter journalism in the deliberate way in which another attaches himself to his life-profession at the very outset. Before he has become a journalist—probably drifting into the profession, though not so much by chance as rather in the natural process of finding one's level—he has often pursued other callings. If journalism be described as a refuge for those who have failed to get a footing elsewhere, the description is, therefore, at least so far accurate, in view of the fact that so many have left those branches and adopted journalism. But the description fails utterly when it is intended, as it commonly is, to imply reproach to the standing of the profession. The old saying which consigns to the Church those who are not blessed with talents for anything, cannot by the

subtlest casuistry be adapted to suit journalism; for in journalism very definite and exceptional talents are required, and moreover, it is a field in which there is no kind of beneficent sentimentality under whose shade the incompetent may be sheltered in high position. As the school of practical life, also, is the most indispensable training-ground for the journalist, it is more likely to be a positive advantage to him if he approaches his career after having been at work of a different character, because in that case he has inevitably gained experience which will be of value to him in a hundred ways. To say that no knowledge comes amiss to the journalist is only to express a very exact truth. There is no reason why he should not know the Bible and Shakespeare, and if to these he adds an acquaintance with Milton, so much the better. He need not have had a classical education, though that is an advantage in his equipment. The more languages he knows besides his own, the more lucrative position he will be able to command, but the least of his acquirements in this respect must be a workable knowledge of French and German. Also, a distinguished journalist once advised the young journalist who possessed £500 to spend it all in travelling; which is an excellent thing to do, as nothing broadens and informs the mind so much as travel. History he must know from the roots, and especially he who starts to-day in journalism should not neglect a close study of

the history of the United States, a country which is probably destined to go hand in hand with Great Britain, if not to lead it, in the future march. With all these the journalist requires training in the faculty of interpretation, and this is probably best got in the graduated work of a newspaper office, although of the leaders in journalism it may be said that they are born with it. On the correctness of his instincts much depends. In the office of a great paper, witnessing the phases of the whole outer world as they present themselves to the corporate institute of the Press, studying how every beat of the pulse of its readers is answered and their minds on national and parochial questions of every kind interpreted by a good newspaper, the young journalist is introduced to a responsible acquaintance with his calling. This training in the faculty of exhaustive observation he receives usually in the provinces. London itself is too specialized to be a good preparatory school: it is the finishing academy, the goal, and is much too busy to find time for training men in the initiatory stages. The best experience is gained on newspapers in Manchester, Leeds, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, and other provincial centres which have a large variety of institutions. These papers, again, draw a proportion of their men from small country papers. The reporter has been earning, say £1 a week on a weekly paper in a small town, increased to 30/- or 32/- weekly

by correspondence for city papers, which pay him either by a fixed salary or on space rates. At length he is offered a post on one of the city papers, which, although it may not give him much more money than he has been earning, means a certain step to earning more, and a position carrying more prestige. On a large provincial morning paper he will be the "junior" man, paid at £80 or £90, which if he stays and gets a reputation for proficiency will increase on a first-class staff to £250, and higher in the case of chief-reporters and good men with long experience. While the majority have no ambition beyond the provincial newspaper and steady wages, there are always a few whose talents call for a wider sphere of activity; for these London contains many allurements. These come to London on the first opportunity, which occurs either when they are sent to the metropolitan office of their own journal, or when a London paper searching for new blood makes a tempting offer to them.

The reporting of political speeches is now practically left to the sole charge of the press agencies. When Dickens was a reporter papers sent their own men into the country by stage coach to report political speeches. At a later day a few papers would combine to get a report done, each sending one man to work with the others. To-day a corps of reporters attend important political gatherings and does a report for the whole of the newspapers of the country.

This is the work of the agencies. The reports are telegraphed from anywhere and delivered on the sub-editor's desk at 10/- or 15/- a column. A newspaper often sends one of its own staff to such a meeting, however, in order to write a special descriptive account. Another effect of the press agencies has been the abolition of the miscellaneous worker—the "penny-a-liner." There are, of course, hundreds of men who are paid at the rate of 1d. a line, but the "penny-a-liner" in the old somewhat disreputable, Bohemian sense has disappeared. Thirty years ago Fleet Street was a very different place from what it is now. These were the days of the "penny-a-liner." Careless of dress; careless of life; his day perpetually afternoon when things were flourishing; and who, when he had to go without a meal (or without two or three meals at a time) accepted the inevitable with philosophic grace; this man lived purely on his powers of observation and his readiness to seize opportunity. He was not industrious; regular labour of any kind would not have suited him. He followed his own feeble will. To-day a long description of a horrible murder; to-morrow a brief paragraph about the feeding of swans in the park; an account of some extraordinary occurrence; the unearthing of a foreign revolutionary who had in him all the makings of a hero—on no subject was the pen of this nomad not exercised. He loved his pipe and his glass and his friend; very often, he

loved his glass too well. In his favourite tavern in Fleet Street he foregathered every evening with half-a-dozen fellow-journalists. Every district and every incident had its penny-a-liner. Now all this is only a memory. The profession has risen steadily in tone and ideals. The nomad has died out: the drunken journalist is to be met with strictly *par exception*. Exterior circumstances have borne their part in effecting this change. Life is more rapid, not in one but in every field of activity. In the newspapers the first reflection of every movement is seen, and on the face of the newspaper itself there is printed to-day, for those who have eyes to see, unmistakable signs of steadiness and regulated industry. The day of the drunken journalist is over; the brilliant but erratic person who worked to-day and drank through the rest of the week has been displaced by the vigilant, steady man who works every day, and whose "copy" can be depended upon to arrive in time. But the principal factor in the abolition of the "penny-a-liner" has been the Press Agency. In London the Press Association, the Central News, the National Press Agency, and the Exchange Telegraph Company principally, supply the papers with all news of a routine character. Their reporters cover the whole field on behalf of hundreds of papers who subscribe to them throughout the country, and by reason of the number of their subscribers they are able to supply intelligence at a much lower

cost than each of the papers would spend if each kept men of its own to collect the common news.

The effect of the news agencies has been felt also in the Gallery. Service in the Gallery of the Houses of Parliament was at one time one of the highly-prized positions which the journalist desired. To represent one's paper in the mother of Parliaments will always be a coveted honour, but the Gallery to-day is no longer the pinnacle of greatness it was considered ten and fifteen years ago. When newspapers combined to cheapen their parliamentary reports, they formed an association which does the same reports for hundreds of papers, and, therefore, does not leave to the individual journalist the same great chance of making money which he had formerly. Twelve years ago the journalist, besides having greater opportunities to earn extras in reporting, might easily write half-a-dozen "letters" from the Gallery for different papers, weekly, bi-weekly, and daily, and draw a guinea a-piece for them. Now the Press Association and the Central News supply Parliamentary reports and "letters" to hundreds of papers at the rate of about 10/- a column. Many Gallery men in those days earned £20 a week, and sometimes more, right through the Session. To-day it is a big week which produces £10, and the nominal pay is about £6 weekly. Exclusive of leader-writers and the staffs of the news agencies, there are sixty men in the Gallery for the London papers, and a

similar number for the provincial papers. The largest staff is that of *The Times*, which numbers sixteen, including a summary writer. Most of the London men are "annuals": that is, they are attached to their journal on a yearly salary; while the greater part of the provincial paper men are "sessionals," which means that they are paid only for the time Parliament is sitting. When Parliament is not sitting the "annuals" are at the beck and call of their paper to share in the ordinary work, but they have usually a large amount of leisure. The "sessionals" are less fortunate, and have to depend on chance Law-Court work or any jobs from their offices during the recess. Lobbying is one of the most onerous and irksome duties of the Parliamentary journalist. There are about forty lobbyists, who do not, as a rule, enter the Gallery in the course of the day at all. They mix with the Members in the Lobby, secure information about appointments to Committees, watch party intrigues, and in general read the outward signs of the whole inner movement of party politics. This work requires a great amount of tact, and the Lobbyist, whose salary ranges from £300 to £500 a year, is frequently consulted by his editor as a guide in shaping policy.

A man who enters the profession through the gates of reportership is liable to become mechanical in his work and limited in his outlook. Scores of men have been expert shorthand writers, and

have desired to go no higher in the profession. They can "take down" the fastest speaker and render a faithful transcription of his speech, but ask them to summarise in a few sentences the pith of what has been said and they are helpless. The journalist is only a journalist when he is an all-round man, and he must not be a mechanical worker. Therefore, if one has been trained as a reporter he must assimilate all the experience of his probationary years, and at the same time divest himself of the mechanical habits which his work in that period has induced. At the present day shorthand is becoming less and less a necessity to the journalist. It is now to be regarded as merely an accomplishment, an instrument to be taken up and laid down at will. If the varied knowledge of life is secured without undergoing a shorthand-reportership, the young journalist will have escaped the danger of falling into the mechanical rut. He may at once write, and if he writes with knowledge, discrimination, and in simple, direct language, his work will be accepted.

Another way of entering the profession in London is by becoming secretary to a journalist of eminence, whose good word, generously given when it is deserved, will be valuable in after years, when the secretary himself is seeking to take his place in the senior ranks. It must not be supposed, however, that personal influence alone can secure a post for a man. An idea commonly held in some circles is that posts go

by favour: that if one knows an editor intimately or personally, his future is as good as assured, however poor his ability. Nothing is more absurd, and the beginner ought to sweep such an idea clear from the horizon of his hopes and fears. If the stranger bears an introductory letter from one journalist to another, undoubtedly a certain deference is secured for him—for journalists are the fairest of friends. But this does not carry the stranger far. Only so far that when he sends in his first article it will be kindly regarded: a special lookout will have been kept for it, and if it is good enough it will be printed. Then if the editor wants to order a special piece of work to be done and there are two men he knows who are equally capable of doing it, he will give it to the one who has been recommended by his friend. The important fact to be grasped, therefore, is that good work is the one and only standard by which an editor is guided in accepting contributors to his paper. He will not offer a position on his staff to any man until he is satisfied that he is a ready and a well-informed writer, and that his copy can be depended upon in every way. Young contributors who send contributions to any or every paper in turn, have a trick of believing in their jealous hearts that their articles have been returned without being looked at, but a moment's reflection should convince them that one of the reasons of the editor's existence is to pick out the good articles from the

enormous number of all kinds that he receives. The term "good" is employed here in the editorial sense, because an article may be interesting and well-written, and yet have to be rejected to make room for another which has no other qualification than that of being suitable to the public interests of the moment. An article on the North Pole, for example, would be useless to an editor when the roar of battle is in the ears of the nation. At such a time the demand would be for articles on the regiments that have been sent to the front, the career of the General or the Commander of the Fleet, the character of the enemy, picturesque accounts of the territory in which the engagement is likely to be fought out, and suchlike. It is not necessary here or in any book whatever to say what subjects should be chosen by the free-lance; that is, the man who, without being attached to one paper, sends his article to several in turn, according as he thinks it will be likely to suit the readers of a certain one. There is no rule. The journalist judges for himself what is uppermost in the public mind; each able writer has a test of his own for knowing what new subject the public will be interested in reading about at the morning or the evening meal, and he goes to work to produce that. The market is large: there are something like 25 daily, 50 weekly (including the illustrated journals), and 70 monthly papers and magazines that are open for

articles of a general character. The choice of material is wide as life. No subject nowadays, from the portraits of Christ to a fight in the House of Commons, is debarred from discussion in the daily newspapers. The persons to be encountered here and there in the world who would have a newspaper exclude reports of scandal and vice, may be assured that so long as scandal and vice are allowed to happen in the world the newspapers will continue to give to such occurrences the moral reprobation of publicity. When Mr. Balfour not long ago made a daring excursion into literary criticism, and declared that the mine of fiction was worked out, Mr. William Black asked the statesman to be reassured, for (he said) so long as the world contained two men and a maid, there would be fresh plots and situations for the novelist's pen. It is so with journalism. The informative article describing the nature and resources of the latest part of China to be grabbed by Russia gets a place in the columns beside an account of the latest invention in flying machines. A criticism of the new Prisons Bill from the point of view of the habitual criminal; a "society" description of the duchess's ball; an article treating rain as the music of the spheres—nothing comes amiss. Picturesqueness in the style of telling is another factor in successful daily journalism to-day. Simple bald facts satisfied the London papers of ten years ago, but now-

a-days the high-pressure living has created a demand for brief, animated, vivid pictures of events. It is necessary to tell the facts in a terse, striking manner. The reader must be led on through a continuous narrative to the end, and not be obliged to leave off with a yawn when he is only half-way through. This requirement of picturesqueness is good for the journalist, because it gives him more opportunity of stamping his individuality upon his work, and differentiating himself from "the crowd." At the same time he must not write round his subject. A merely literary man is likely to fall into this error; he lets the facts wait upon the method. To get and state the facts is the journalist's first consideration; he is writing for the hour, not for posterity. If he tells his story with polished literary effect, so much the better, but even if literary form be poor an article will stand an excellent chance of admission to newspapers if the writer possesses the journalistic nose, and has run to earth the most interesting, or entertaining, or amusing, phases of his subject. Not more than five in every hundred throughout the whole vast army of newspaper readers will detect a split infinitive in a sentence; but the commercial man will drop his paper impatiently if for two mornings it neglects to quote the market price of certain stocks he is interested in; the lady will be grievously disappointed if there is nothing about the Princess and the bazaar and no news

of the music world; the cricket enthusiast will vote the paper mad if it does not contain a description of his county's great victory; and every honest (and dishonest) man and woman will instantly abandon to its hopeless fate a newspaper which fails to show them daily the true tragedy of other people's lives.

The weekly journals demand a literary treatment of a subject, and the magazines an extended treatise upon it. Chance contributions are less frequently sent to weekly journals than they are to daily papers, as a weekly is produced more leisurely, and there is time for known contributors to be requisitioned. In the monthly magazines and reviews, however, the scope is the widest possible, for with certain exceptions there are no regular contributors to them, and the names of new men appear every month on their title-pages. *The Quarterly* and *The Edinburgh* reviews are written by scholars and theologians. The highest experts of every branch of knowledge and industry contribute to *The Nineteenth Century*, *The Fortnightly Review*, *The Contemporary Review*, and *The National Review*. Less imposing and more purely literary magazines are *The Cornhill*, and *Longman's*. The average pay of the best monthly magazines is a guinea a page. Special articles, of course, are paid at special rates. An eminent statesman who is an authority on certain questions once wrote an article for one of the monthly reviews, and when the editor

asked his opinion as to the cheque he replied that he never wrote for less than £75. Editors, however, are reputed to be confident in their own estimate of the value of contributions, and in this case a cheque was drawn for £50 and duly forwarded. American magazines are very liberal when there is a big man to be booked on this side of the Atlantic. They will instruct their agent to offer as much as £100 for an article by, say, a political party leader. In this way American magazines secure exceptional contributions, for in their boldness they offer a large sum to the very topmost authority, who, possibly, is by no means a regular writer, and whom the London editor has not dreamed of approaching. One form of literary effort that is tempting to magazine contributors may be profitably repressed, namely, the laboured critical literary essay. Its day has gone ; the world is too much occupied to care for the ordinary essayist's estimate of the genius of Marlowe, Swift, or Browning. The young writer, however, would be well advised to direct his talents to any other field of production rather than the literary essay. He may observe, for one thing, that humour is sadly to seek in our English magazines, and he may be assured that originality in humour is certain of open arms anywhere. At the same time there are a few writers from whom a literary essay is always welcome. Need one mention the names of John Morley, Leslie Stephen, Dowden, and Saintsbury ?

There are a few great prizes in London editorships, prizes of £2,000 a year and upwards. Many men are earning from £500 to £800 in the ordinary branches; and a few specialists as much as £1,500 or £2,000.

Leader-writing is usually paid at from three to five guineas a column. It is desirable to aim for a position on the staff of a paper, either by being paid a salary or being guaranteed regular work which will be paid at space rates. Sub-editors receive from four to eight guineas weekly. The ordinary London reporter who attends meetings earns from £4 to £6 weekly. A descriptive writer or an interviewer earns £8 or £10 weekly. Some reporters and descriptive writers are on the staffs of the papers at an annual salary, while others, the majority, are paid at space rates—1d. to 2d., and in some cases 3d. per line. Religious journalism is badly paid, with certain exceptions. Trade journalism pays, as a rule, well; and fashion journalism also. The latter, which must be taken to include the ladies' page and the "weddings" departments of the daily paper, affords the best chance for women, who are not seen to advantage otherwise in the bustle of work which a daily paper requires; they are lacking in the invaluable quality of humour, and too often deficient in the capacity to write ordinary English, besides being physically unable to compete with men in the wear and tear of daily journalistic life. For daily journalism is emphati-

cally a career for the young and the strong ; not for old men (there are very few men in it over fifty years of age), nor for invalids, and hardly for women. Above all, vigour and bravery are required in the war correspondent, an art which, however, since the best days of Gruneisen, Russell, and Forbes, has greatly decayed ; the opportunity for personal distinction in securing, and cunning contrivance in despatching, news from the battle-field having almost disappeared, and been replaced by precise regulations on behalf of each army for superintending and limiting the correspondent's facilities and facts. *Esprit de corps* in the profession is maintained by the Institute of Journalists, founded in 1889, which is at the present time establishing a provident fund whereby members will be able to insure against incapacitation, and also on the system which allows the insurer to receive a return for his money after a certain number of years ; by the Press Fund, a wealthy institution, dating from the sixties, for helping journalists in cases of breakdown, and their families when they die ; and by the Press Club, to which a fair proportion of the rank and file belong.

The question of anonymous as opposed to signed Journalism, is one that intimately concerns the entrant to the profession to-day. Opinion is widely at variance on the prospects of the new practice of signed articles. One school of journalists clings to the belief that the corpor-

ate WE is the secret of the power of the English press: the other, a small one, is all for individual recognition of the journalist's merits. *The Nineteenth Century* does not admit to that review anything that is not signed, and the monthly periodicals, as a whole, publish very few articles without the writer's name. In the popular illustrated magazines everything is signed. In the weekly press *The Spectator* holds strictly to anonymity, but *The Saturday Review*, under its new management, appears every week with many signed contributions. In the daily press the practice of signing special articles has grown remarkably during the last few years. *The St. James's Gazette* and *The Pall Mall Gazette*, among the evening papers, and *The Daily Mail* and *The Daily Chronicle*, among the morning ones, are the chief papers to countenance it regularly. Occasionally *The Daily Telegraph* has a signed criticism or social article, and more frequently *The Westminster Gazette*, but no daily paper publishes signed leading articles, while *The Times*, *The Standard*, and *The Morning Post* do not publish signed articles in any part of the paper. Therefore, "the childish imposture of the editorial WE," which Mr. John Morley declared sixteen years ago to be "already thoroughly exploded," is still prevalent.* Men, like the editor of *The Standard*

* Did Mr. John Morley understand the meaning of the Editorial "We?" I am told by an old journalist that it represented not the paper at all, but the general public, whose views the Editor professed to set forth under this pronoun. —W.B.

and the editor of *The Guardian* believe, doubtless, in the increased power which a man may wield if little is known about him by those over whom he is placed. Mystery is always attractive to the average person, who, if he is favourably impressed by one whose personal acquaintance he does not enjoy, will exaggerate his good qualities, and if not, he will magnify the bad ones. As British editors may fairly be said to possess in the public sight only good, disinterested qualities, the respect of their readers for them is never in doubt. But, if a curious individual were to ask any six men in Piccadilly, or Cheapside, on any morning of the year, the name of the editor of *The Times* or *The Standard*, of *The Daily News* or *The Daily Chronicle*, or the names of any of the distinguished writers in these journals, the chances are greatly against one of them being able to do aught but appear surprised at the question, and apologetically confess his ignorance. They do not know any of the men who write for the papers, and the very editors, men who influence every day the life around them, are unknown by name and unrecognised in individuality.

It is objected that signed Journalism takes away freedom of expression; obviously this may be the result in the case of men who are not strong enough to back their opinions, but with the best and most conscientious journalist it need not be so. Indeed, it is not so: many living

writers might be mentioned whose criticisms are not less outspoken because they are signed ; on the contrary, they seem to be written the more carefully and with a keener sense of responsibility when the name appears. Certainly, they are not the less vigorous or fearless than are the contributions of anonymous writers. That a section of the public appreciates a change which allows them to know whose opinions they are reading, and which shows them the journalist as an honest intellectual worker, unshrouded by any artificial mystery, is undoubted, and indications of this, as has already been mentioned, are growing. Signed Journalism (its advocates may be supposed as saying) is like placing a banquet of carefully-reasoned opinions before the reader, and leaving to his judgment the selection of what dishes suit his palate and digestion ; whereas with anonymous journalism he is ostentatiously directed as to what he should eat. The present writer has asked for the opinions of many leading editors and journalists upon the subject. These opinions, as was to be expected, differed widely.

Those who object to the signing of articles do so on the ground (1) that the influence of the papers would be lessened by the signing of articles : (2) that there is no marked increase in the number of signed articles : (3) that the anonymity which shields its writers has largely contributed to its character for incorruptibility : (4) that personal journalism leads to blunders

which are impossible under the restraints imposed by the traditions of great papers: that while a specialist's opinion carries additional weight by the use of his name, it is not the business of the editor to fabricate a bubble reputation for a casual contributor: that the unsigned article is in many cases a real joint effort, the collective opinion of the editor and his staff: that in the case of signed articles, the writer thinks first of himself, in the other case, he thinks first of his subject: that the leading article does not represent the views of the writer, but the policy of the paper: that a paper is not run in order to advance writers, but to defend views and to disseminate intelligence. Those who are in favour of signed articles argue (1) that the traditional power of the leading article, unsigned, never amounts to much: (2) that the power of the individual writer would be enormously increased, and with it the standard of his work: that all articles which express personal views should be signed: that it is due to a good writer that his name should be known: that signed articles are useful for expert opinion: that the tendency is towards signed articles except in the case of political leading articles. There seems a prevalence of opinion that whatever papers are signed, some certainly should not be: that all expressions of personal opinion should be signed, and that it would be fatal to a paper if it were handicapped by being connected with the "personality, the preferences,

the prejudices, the experiences of any individual."

After all, the first and the last word about present-day journalism, as well as about the journalism of the future, so far as that can be foreseen is that it is, and is likely to be, accomplished under conditions calling for the constant and disciplined suppression of the journalist's self. The present writer remembers to have read somewhere, and admired, as a tyro in journalism, the opinion that the best journalist was the one who lived in a cellar. Like all good illustrations, this possibly exaggerated the idea it was intended to convey, but the moral of it is none the less clear. The journalist is a teacher as well as a guide; the real journalist is only one man in five hundred. It is not a crowded profession; there is plenty of room for good men, especially at the top. There, the journalist must be superior morally and intellectually to those whom he aspires to instruct and guide. He must also hold aloof from the ordinary public and personal entanglements of life. Every movement must be viewed from the outside: like Tourguéneff, the best journalist is the "born onlooker"; but with this addition, that he must also be a man of action. To be an onlooker in events, and yet not a sharer in them, secures the proper degree of impartiality and impersonalness which in a journalist are among the highest requirements. His part in life may be likened to

one who, unseen, sails every day in a calm, judicial atmosphere, over, but not too far above, the haunts of men, witnessing the heroic deed and the common tragedy on the land, reading from every point a lesson, and then with freshness and point directing affairs so that they may lead to the result which only a beneficent and liberal mind, believing disinterestedly in the future of mankind, can conceive. He plays many parts; if he choose, he can enter any society whatever. In a brilliant picture of London greatness, drawn by a Voltaire of the future, he will compare with the favoured citizen of Athens, who, after listening to Pericles in the Assembly, and worshipping with Phidias in the Parthenon, could adjourn from a play of Sophocles to a supper with Aspasia—with the important restriction, however, that the supper must be over before midnight to allow the London editor to drive to Fleet Street in time to write his "leader" for the morning paper. A man of principle, as well as of assurance and talents, the editor in the first rank to-day must possess the courage of the soldier, the sympathy of the poet, the practical sense of the statesman. No position affords so great a scope for unselfish genius; none is so varied in its interests and outlook; none so attractive to the mind which is content to watch the influence for good it may work from behind. "Give yourself royally," murmured the dying Carlyle to Professor Tyn-

dall when asked for a last message; and it is no presumption to say that this maxim is acted upon in the profession of Journalism to-day, no less than it has been in the days of Barnes and Delane and Macdonell.

Chapter IV.

The Relations of the Bookseller and the Author.

In Literature there are but two persons, properly speaking, concerned. There is the writer, who creates, and the bookseller, who distributes his work to the public. Between these two has sprung up the publisher, who is not in reality wanted in the production of current general literature. That is to say, a simple committee of authors and booksellers could manage with ease the whole of the production of general literature. There might be other committees for the management of scientific and technical literature ; others for educational literature, and so forth. But the creator and the distributor are the only two actually necessary. It should, therefore, be the chief aim of the creator and distributor to come more and more into touch, and to work together, quietly and experimentally at first ; but yet to work together. Such a committee as this, if once formed and prudently managed, would be able to supersede the general publisher altogether.

I think that no one has ever yet pointed out to writers the cardinal fact that they are entirely dependent, not upon publishers, who can only offer their books to the trade, but upon booksellers, who offer them to the public. I am sure that no one has ever exhorted writers to recognise this fact *with the corollary that it is their bounden duty to do all in their power for the maintenance and the prosperity of the bookseller.* If he cannot afford to "stock" books, how are books to be published?—for publication must include exhibition for sale. They cannot otherwise be said to be published. As a matter of fact—I have already stated this, and I repeat it there are hundreds of books produced every year which have no chance whatever, because they are never exhibited for sale. The bookseller says, if they are asked for, that he has not got them in stock, but that he can get them.

Yet the bookseller and the author, in spite of their community of interest, have been drifting more and more apart. It is the policy of the publisher to keep them apart. It should be their own policy to come together.

It is admitted on all sides that the bookseller's position was never worse than it is at this moment. The love of literature; the habit of reading; the buying of books; are all increasing by leaps and bounds; yet the bookseller cannot live; he grows every day poorer. The worst feature of the case is that his growing poverty is accelerated

by the condition of his trade. These conditions must be altered if the bookseller is to live at all.

Books are to-day multiplied to so great an extent that even the more wealthy booksellers cannot keep in stock all the books that might be offered to the public, far less the poor country bookseller. Remember what has been said of novelists—that in the list of W. H. Smith and Son there are 1,300! How can a bookseller have all the works of 1,300 novelists on his shelves? How many never get on any bookseller's shelves at all? As for high-priced books, the bookseller does not dare to order them on the chance of selling them. We have consequently a state of things in which not only high-priced books, but also the ordinary novels are never exhibited at all, unless on the shelves of a few booksellers. In other words, they are not published. Booksellers simply cannot any longer afford to subscribe books which they are not tolerably certain to sell.

What are the causes of this depression of the trade? They are set forth in the report of a sub-committee appointed by the Society of Authors to consider this and other questions. The following is an abridged version of this report:—

(i). The 3d. in the shilling discount is generally advanced as the sole cause of the depression of trade. This, however, is not the case; there are other causes. Besides, this discount is not

universal. Where the practice prevails, it is quite clear that the small bookseller cannot live by the sale of copyright works alone.

(ii). A second cause of the present position is the depression of agriculture, which has inflicted such enormous losses on country gentlemen, cathedral and county clergy, and fellows of colleges, all of whom were formerly buyers of books.

(iii). The competition of drapers, who have added cheap books to their other wares.

(iv). The partial loss of the educational book trade, whether of elementary or of higher schools, which is now often carried on direct between schools and publishers.

(v). The practice of many free libraries, which deal with the publisher, or the wholesale agent, instead of the local bookseller.

(vi). A want of energy and "push" among booksellers as a whole. It is quite evident that if the mass of people are to buy books they must have books, like everything else, offered to them.

Other causes, not mentioned in this report, may be adduced. For instance, the real risk of the book trade, namely, the reception of a book by the public, has been shifted by the publisher upon the bookseller, who can ill afford to bear it. He has to buy whether he is able to sell again or not. Then the terms offered them are ruinously hard. For instance, a book published at 10/6 costs 7/2 and sells at 8/-. One at 21/- costs net

14/3 and sells 15/9, the profits being materially less than their office expenses. Publishers refuse to recognize that the discount system exists. They keep to the old terms which were adopted before the discount system. Therefore, the profit to be divided between author and publisher is out of all proportion to that allowed the bookseller, who buys a book on the chance and risk of selling it. Again, the cost of production of the second and following editions is very much less than that on the first. An ordinary 6/- book can be produced for a second edition of 3,000 copies at 9d. a copy. Does the bookseller get any better terms for the new editions? He does not. On such a book there is an actual profit of 2/10 a copy, but the bookseller gets no better terms. Of course the bookseller should be able to get a book in second and future editions, at reduced terms, while the author should have an increased royalty. It is true that if the bookseller orders twelve copies, thirteen are sent him, the return for the price of twelve: or twenty-five as twenty-four, or seven as six-and-a-half. But this odd copy frequently proves a doubtful advantage. That is to say, if he cannot sell the odd copy, what good is it to him? And, though he may save by the odd copy in the case of a cheap book, he cannot order largely of a high priced book and so has to pay for single copies.

Again, the publisher puts in a claim for his office expenses. But he refuses to make the

least allowance for the bookseller's office expenses, which, in many cases, exceed the actual possible profit.

Now, if the bookseller is swept away, how is literature to be offered to the public?

By means of the stores? By means of the drapers? By means of grocers or any other tradesmen? Perhaps. That may be the fate of literature. Remember, however, that a very large class of book buyers are those who live in the quiet country where reading is the favourite amusement. If the bookseller of the country ceases to exist, the stores cannot take his place, because there are no stores in country towns, and the drapers know nothing at all about new literature, and have so far only attempted the very cheapest form of non-copyright books.

There is, however, a possibility of preserving the bookseller.

(i). By improving the terms and letting him have books at a lower rate. It is objected that the booksellers will use this privilege in order to increase the present rate of discount. But booksellers are not suicides.

(ii). By supplying the bookseller with books on sale or return.

If this is done the shop may be supplied at once with as many new books as the bookseller chooses to take; the public will be attracted to the show of new books: there will be an appearance of prosperity, which itself will help to induce prosperity.

It is objected that many of these books will be returned unsold and soiled. Perhaps. Whether is it better that they should have their chance and fail, or that they should be on the shelves and be kept clean, but remain unseen and have no chance of circulation?

(iii). By abolishing the odd copy and having a uniform price.

(iv). By the issue of non-copyright works by the booksellers themselves for themselves. This they could do without any capital at all or any expenditure.

(v). By forming collections of prize books for their schools.

There are other expedients (see the "Method of the Future," p. 207), but these suggestions will suffice. I would not, however, omit personal effort. What I, for my own part, desire, above all, is that the writer shall feel that the bookseller, like himself, *belongs to the book;* that it is the interest of the writer, whether the writer of one book only or of many, in whatever branch he may work, to maintain the bookseller. He is absolutely necessary to the writer. The publisher is not; a distributing machinery may be started by means of booksellers alone, or authors alone, but no one can do without the bookseller.

What can be done for him, then, by individual effort?

A great deal. Any one man may create, in his own town, public opinion, and maintain it, in

favour of buying the books for the free library or the village libraries of the local bookseller; the school books of the local bookseller; the prize books of the local bookseller; and indeed all the books wanted by the country people, of the local bookseller. It is possible, too, to awaken the public to a desire for beauty in the appearance of their books; to make them loathe ill-printed books on vile paper even though they are offered for a few pence. My chief desire, I repeat, is to awaken in the mind of my reader—a literary aspirant—a sense of brotherhood between the author and the bookseller. I am convinced that the former has it in his power materially to benefit the latter. And I hope that the bookseller will learn to turn to the author as his friend for help and, through him, to the public for sympathy.

Chapter V.

Copyright and Literary Property.

By G. H. Thring,

Secretary of the Society of Authors.

It will be the object of the following chapter to consider the question of literature as property protected by law. For many generations literature has been property, and has had a commercial side, yet it has not been exclusively the property of the author, its originator, nor has it returned to the originator the pecuniary reward which he should be entitled to claim.

As this property more than any other is the actual production of the individual, one would have thought that it ought, more than any other property, to be his in eternal possession.

For many generations, however, the producer, after publication, had no protection at all, and has it now only for a limited time.

Literary property is treated in accord with the

doctrines of modern socialism, as, after a fixed period, the public are allowed to scramble for it.

Literary property has no doubt from the very earliest times been a source of livelihood, if a poor one, to its founder. The ancient tribal story teller kept himself alive in this way.

We may pass over the ancient and mediæval periods of authorship.

When literature began to be adopted as a profession, that is, in the 17th century, the literary man was always in a dependent position, subject to a patron, the hack of a bookseller.

If he was not such a dependent he was one who gained his living by other means and took to literature as a pastime. So that there were really two classes of literary men: those who made a living out of literature, as Dryden; and those who lived by other means, as Milton.

The first of these produced literary property, and turned it to some commercial value to themselves.

The second produced literary property, which they did not look upon as a means of livelihood.

In both these cases, in the first through necessity; in the second, through carelessness, the chief gains went to the distributor, the tradesman.

Up to the statute of Anne, 1709, the first copyright law, it is doubtful whether the exclusive right of multiplying copies of an original work existed. There was no statutory founda-

tion for such a right, and it can only have existed, if at all, at common law. Although literary property with a commercial value existed, the originator, the author, had no exclusive copyright in his work, which anybody might reprint and sell for his own advantage.

It is a curious fact, that may be noticed *en passant*, that the laws which were originally framed to protect the printer, have finally placed the author, the real owner, in an independent position.

Printing was first introduced into England by Caxton in 1474, and almost at once the great pecuniary value of it became evident. During the beginning of the sixteenth century it does not appear that the position of authors advanced much as possessors of their own property. But it appears that the Crown was trying to establish a prerogative right over the printing of books, as such right was likely to be of great pecuniary importance, and in the early part of this same century it appears that certain books were printed under this prerogative right.

In 1556 the Charter of the Stationers' Company was granted, stating among other things that no person in England should practise the art of printing unless he were one of this society.

Here is, perhaps, the first evidence of the increase in the value of literary property. In fact, it had been at last brought "within the range of practical politics."

But still the author is not considered. It is the tradesman who has to be legislated for.

The Stationers' Company was, in many ways, a very powerful corporation. It had the right of making by-laws which were as binding as the laws of the land, and it had the power to prevent others printing, and to search for and burn, and otherwise deal with piratical works and works against Church or State. This extract is sufficient to show the influence that was thrown into the hands of the printers. The Author must sell to a member of the Stationers' Company or run the risk of not getting a public hearing.

The next important event in the evolution of literary property is the Licensing Act of Charles II, 1662.

This Act again had practically no reference to authors, but was brought in as a restraint on free printing, and, with this end in view, it forbade the printing of any book unless first licensed and entered in the register of Stationers' Company. It forbade the printing of books contrary to the doctrine of the Church or opposed to the established government.

The Act finally forbade any person from printing or importing, without the consent of the owner, any book which any person had the sole right to print by virtue of letters patent or entry on the register of Stationers' Company.

The penalty for infringement was a fine, half of which went to the king and half to the owner.

This licensing Act was continued by various subsequent Acts, but finally expired in 1679.

For some years the Stationers' Company appear to have endeavoured to rule the whole position, and passed by-laws with the view of keeping control of the literary market and printing presses.

In 1709 was passed 8 Anne, Chap. 19, what is commonly known as the Statute of Anne on the petition oft repeated of the booksellers and publishers.

It is still clear that the author had very little voice in the matter of his own property. Yet, whether he knew it or not, he gained a point by this Act, and the Legislature for the first time seemed to recognise that the author had some property in the outflow of his own genius.

Clause 1 gave a statutory right to the author for 14 years and no longer in the printing of his work.

The Act also provided against unlawful printing and importing.

Such piratical action to be liable to penalty.

There was to be registration at Stationers' Hall, and finally it provided after the expiration of 14 years that the sole right of printing or disposing of copies should return to the authors, if they were living, for another period of 14 years.

It was at a date subsequent to this statute, after the first copyrights existing under it expired, that the great controversy arose concerning

the common law right of property existing in an author as distinct from the statute law right. The controversy was no doubt exceedingly important at the time, but it is hardly worth while at this period to go into the "pros" and "cons" of this vexed question.

It is sufficient to state that prior to the statute some sort of common law right in literary property, shadowy and undefined, existed. That after the statute of Anne it was argued that literary property was statute defined, and that, therefore, no common law right existed.

After much disputation it was decided in Donaldson *v.* Beckett that prior to publication a common law right existed in the author; after publication his rights were statute defined.

It is impossible to see how the judgment on the question of common law and statute right could well have been other than as settled in Donaldson *v.* Beckett, but it is easy to see what a revolution in literary property would have taken place if the verdict had been different.

The question of what amounts to publication is of vast importance, but this is hardly the place to go into a detailed discussion of the subject, even if space permitted.

The position of an author's property under statute law varied but little during the next century. Under a statute of Geo. III. the author's exclusive right was extended for the term of his life.

Musical compositions appear to have been included under all these acts by implication.

Dramatic property, or rather the right of representation, a most important branch of this subject, appears to have escaped the notice of the legislature until quite a late date. Dramatic authors reserved their rights by not allowing the words of dramas to be published. So that it was impossible for any but a very diligent scribe to obtain a complete copy with a view to acting the piece. It is probable also that as there were few theatres and few theatrical companies it would not be worth any one's while to rob the author by this method, but finally the position of the dramatist was defined, as it was decided in the courts that acting a play was not publication, and therefore the common law right still existed in the author until publication in book form. As it appeared that an author's rights with regard to dramatic representation needed some sounder basis than a mere decision in the courts, a statute was passed, 3 and 4 William IV, c. 15, giving to the author of an unpublished tragedy, etc., the sole right of representation, to an author of any published dramatic piece the right of reproduction for a period of twenty-eight years, or to the end of the author's life. This act has been considerably varied and modified by the great act of 5 and 6 Vict., c. 45. On this latter act the law of literary property now depends. It repealed all former acts dealing with book

copyright. Musical compositions were especially mentioned in the definition of book. With regard to dramatic right, public performance under certain restrictions is made equivalent to first publication, so that after public performance the dramatist's property in the right of representation is on the same lines as the author's after publication.

Common law rights are also commensurate in the dramatist before public representation, in the author before publication.

It is now necessary to consider more particularly and in detail what security 5 and 6 Vict. c. 45 gave to the author.

Firstly, the definition of "book" was very comprehensive. It included "every volume, part or division of a volume, pamphlet, sheet of letterpress, sheet of music, map, chart, or plan separately published."

The definition of "dramatic piece" included every tragedy, comedy, play, opera, farce or other musical or dramatic entertainment.

"Copyright" was construed to mean "the sole and exclusive liberty of printing and otherwise multiplying copies of any subject to which the said word is herein applied."

The copyright was to endure for the life of the author and for seven years, or for forty-two years from the date of first publication.

There was a clause referring to registration at Stationers' Hall, followed by clauses dealing with

questions of false entry, transfer of entry, expunging of entry, etc.

Clause 17 prevents piratical importation of copies, and clause 18 refers to copyright in encyclopædias, reviews, and magazines, etc.

It is perhaps the worst clause that has ever been drafted in an Act of Parliament. To discuss its difficulties and to attempt to unravel its mysteries is a task impossible in a short chapter, but points of it will be treated later when dealing with serial rights.

Clause 20 extends the term of copyright in dramatic and musical compositions, making it commensurate from the first representation with that of a book.

The other clauses deal with questions of infringement and minor matters.

This, then, is in brief the substance of the act on which an author's property now rests as far as England and the British Dominions are concerned.

There are, however, two other matters which bear greatly on the commercial value of this property: the first is the Berne Convention, which was signed at Berne on the 9th day of September, 1886, and confirmed by order in Council under the International Copyright Act of 49 and 50, Vic. c. 33, and which has been further added to by the meeting of delegates at Paris in 1896. The second the American Copyright Act of 1891.

International Copyright which culminated in the Berne Convention has only been recognised by civilised countries in the present century; in fact the first Act on the subject was passed in 1837, the first year of the Queen's reign. This was repealed by 7 and 8 Vic. c. 12, which gave larger scope for making copyright arrangements with foreign countries. Under this Act conventions were entered into with many states by orders in Council, but the result of so many different conventions was unsatisfactory and gave rise to serious complications which might have in time become even more involved, as the copyright laws in each of the states were different.

Accordingly, certain delegates of the following nations met at Berne, namely: Germany, Belgium, Spain, France, Great Britain, Haiti, Switzerland, Italy, Tunis, and on the 9th Sept., 1886, the Convention was signed.

It provided that authors of any of the countries of the Union (*i.e.*, the signatories to the convention) should enjoy in the other countries for their works, whether published in one of those countries or unpublished, the rights which the respective laws do now or may hereafter grant to natives.

The enjoyment of these rights was subject to the accomplishment of the conditions and formalities prescribed by law in the country of origin of the work, and could not exceed in the other countries the term of protection granted in the country of origin.

Then followed an exhaustive definition of literary and artistic works.

Protection was given to translations as follows :

Authors of any of the countries of the Union shall enjoy in the other countries the exclusive right of making or authorising the translation of their works until the expiration of ten years from the publication of the original work in one of the countries of the Union.

Authorised translations are protected as original works.

Other articles follow bearing on dramatic and musical works, anonymous and pseudonymous works, and the rights of the separate nations reserved, etc. The delegates met again at Paris in 1896, and amongst other things passed an extension of time as regards the protection of translations.

Since the signing of the Convention Norway has joined the Union, 15th April, 1896.

This Union has naturally added greatly to the security of author's property, and has also increased its commercial value, as with the greater intercourse between the European nations the literature of the different countries gets more widely spread. Authors with the greatest reputations in all branches of literature, science and art, are translated into many languages.

There was one blot, however, on International Copyright which fell particularly hardly on British authors. America had not joined with

the other nations, but still continued to pirate English authors, and to rob them of the efforts of their genius, without in many cases making the slightest acknowledgment. This was not all. In some cases mutilated editions were published with the names of the authors, and still there was no remedy. At last in 1891 the American Copyright Bill became law.

This Act gives copyright to authors in the States subject to compliance with the conditions and formalities necessitated by the Act. Publication must be simultaneous in the States and the country of origin.

The books must be printed from type set up in the States.

This latter condition is most ill-advised, and contrary to the spirit of all International Legislation.

To a limited extent the Act increased authors' property and added to its commercial value.

Every step that confirms to authors the property that ought to be theirs, yet is often taken away from them by their governments, is a step in advance.

What may be an ideal form of law for authors will be dealt with later.

Having now brought the evolution of literary property to its present statutory definition as regards England and other nations, it will be necessary to show what an author can do with the property he has thus finally acquired.

He has the right, subject to certain statutory limitations and regulations, of reproducing copies of his work.

This right again, owing to the development of the commercial side of literature along certain lines, has been sub-divided into distinct and separate methods of reproduction.

The author of a work has :—

1. Book rights (the right of production in book form).

2. Serial rights (the right of publication in the form of periodical or magazine issue).

If the work is in dramatic form, he may have in addition :—

3. Representation rights.

Under certain circumstances.

4. Lecture rights. (These rights exist prior to publication in book form, as when lectures are published in book form anyone may read them as lectures or otherwise.)

It is only necessary here to consider the book rights and serial rights, as, although the other rights form undoubtedly part of the same property, the term "literary property" has come to be considered through restriction, in its use to be mainly applicable to book and serial rights. The most important of these rights, "Book rights," will be first considered. It is most important, because thousands of works are never produced in serial form at all. In the dealings between the author and the modern publisher these rights

alone are generally involved, and these rights alone have to be protected.

For many years past it has been the habit for publishers who act as the middlemen between the authors and their public to draw up the agreements between themselves and the authors. As nearly all the printed agreements have been prepared from the point of view of the former, it is a matter of considerable importance to put before the author the ways and means to protect his own property in these agreements. (See also chapter on "The Author and the Publisher.")

The book rights may be dealt with in four different ways:—

(i). By an agreement for sale outright, which system will convey the copyright, and thus include the serial rights.

N.B.—This is the only form which will cover the serial rights by implication.

(ii). By an agreement for sale on commission. Under this method the author pays for the cost of production.

(iii). By an agreement for profit-sharing. On this basis the most usual agreement is a half share of profits.

(iv). By an agreement for payment by royalty. By which is meant a payment of a certain percentage on the published, or advertised price of each book sold.

All other agreements do not differ from these forms except in combining the principles of two

or more of them into one. Generally such combination is to the disadvantage of the author.

In considering the nature of the author's book rights, as dealt with here, it will not be necessary to discuss the question of the nature of copyright, for with the exception of method No. 1, the copyright is always, and ought always to be, retained by the author. It is sufficient to state that in method No. 1, the author gives up all his property, without limit or restriction, in consideration of a lump sum as an equivalent.

(i). Sub-Division by Country.—It is possible, and often necessary, to divide the rights of publishing thus: to (1) Great Britain; (2) America; (3) the Colonies and Dependencies of Great Britain; (4) each Colony separately; (5) the Continent; (6) the United States, etc. In addition, under this heading, should be included the rights of translation into different languages, and in consequence the publication in translation form in different countries.

(ii). Limitation by Time or Edition.—It is possible to limit the right of publishing, first, to a certain number of years, or, second, to a certain number of editions. The first should, as a general rule, be avoided, as it enables the publishers of the book, if still selling towards the end of the term, to print more than they can sell within the period, and therefore to go on selling the book after the limit assigned. It thus prac-

tically prevents the author from transferring his rights except at a heavy pecuniary loss: for it has been decided in the Courts that a publisher with a time limit has a right to continue selling the stock in hand at the expiration of such limit, but not the right of reprinting. A time limit is, however, of considerable advantage to the author in case he should be desirous of collecting his works into the hands of one publisher, or of otherwise reconsidering his position.

If, therefore, the author should be desirous of placing a time limit in his agreement, he must be careful, by a suitable clause, to protect himself from the danger pointed out above.

The second is absolutely essential in educational, technical, scientific, and other works of similar nature that require, through change of ideas and discoveries, to be brought up to date periodically. The author should be able to renew the control of his work.

(iii.) Limitation by Form of Publication.—This is, *qua* works of fiction published in England, limitation to the three volume, 6s., 3s. 6d., etc. forms (other countries have also recognised forms—America has $1\frac{1}{2}$ dollar, etc.); *qua*, other books to the various prices common to the trade.

It should be remarked that all the sub-divisions in No. 1 are capable of the limitations 2, 3, and *vice versa*, all the limitations under 2 and 3 are capable of sub-divisions in No. 1. Thus the

book rights are capable of being divided into a great number of minor rights, though in matter of practice they are generally only divided into the following :—

(1) Great Britain ; (2) the Colonies and Dependencies ; (3) the United States ; (4) the Continental (Tauchnitz) ; (5) Translation Rights ; (6) Limitation by Editions ; (7) Limitation by Form.

The author has now before him the nature of his book rights, and he must be sure before signing an agreement that he is quite clear that the portion of those rights he is giving away coincides with those rights that he desires to transfer.

Forms of Agreement.

It will be necessary to give a few general notes and hints on the diverse methods of dealing with book rights, giving a cursory view of the systems to be avoided.

In pointing out methods and clauses to be accepted with caution it does not follow that agreements containing none of those here referred to are therefore perfect. Faults of commission are so much more easily discovered than faults of omission.

Before entering further into the question of these agreements, an author should clearly understand that the assignment of the right of publishing, even if it continues so long as the legal term of copyright is not an assignment of copy-

right. The verbal distinction may be slight, but the legal distinction is large. The contract for publication is a personal contract. To give one of many differences, in a bankruptcy, if a publisher held the right to publish, the contract would terminate, if he held the copyright the book would become an asset of the bankrupt estate.

(i). The sale of copyright is very much to be condemned, and it is only admissible in the case of "sale outright"—a method of publishing, not uncommon, which must be adopted with great hesitation and only with the advice of experienced persons. Some writers, however, hold that the best method of publishing is to sell the literary estate outright, making sure that the price given is such as to cover all reasonable chances of success. If an author desires to capitalise his rights, let him do so only after ascertaining, as carefully as possible, what those rights mean.

It should be incidentally mentioned that it has hitherto been practically useless from a pecuniary point of view to publish any work of fiction on commission, or, indeed, to pay anything towards the production of this kind of literature. But commission agreements are not only useful, but sometimes essential, for books of a technical nature; and in the case of these books, if the system is carefully managed, the result to the author in the end is, perhaps, more satisfactory than any other form of publication. Another kind of publishing

on commission is now being introduced. If this proves successful, it is destined to make a great change in the publishing of the future.

(ii). In publishing on commission the author should take care before entering into the contract :

1. That the cost of production is only that which will be actually incurred.
2. That he can prevent charges for advertising where no money is paid.
3. That he can keep control of the advertising, the amount to be expended, and the papers chosen for the advertisements.
4. That he can check the charges made for corrections.

(iii). The third method is that of profit sharing. This method cannot be too strongly condemned on account of the complicated statement of accounts which is generally rendered. To an ordinary individual, publishers' accounts are most difficult to understand, and in some cases are intentionally made so. Even when the *bona-fides* on both sides is indisputable, cases of difference of opinion are likely to occur. Either the book is over-advertised, or advertised in the wrong papers, and therefore the profits are reduced ; or the book is under-advertised and the sales thereby curtailed.

Again, the amount charged for corrections, which it is almost impossible to check, may lead

to a feeling of distrust, where especially (for a profit-sharing arrangement is a quasi-partnership) there should be confidence. The writer of technical books of all sorts should beware of this form of agreement, as publishers often put forward this method of publishing as equitable where there is some risk of the sales not covering the cost of production, or of the book going slowly.

If, however, the author desires to publish under this system, he should obtain, before entering into an agreement, an estimate of the cost of production from the publisher. To this he should add the sum to be agreed upon in advertising, over which he should retain some control, and an approximate amount for author's corrections. After reckoning the total that would arise from a reasonable sale of the work, he should see whether there could be any profit left to be divided.

The words "incidental expenses" are often inserted in a half-profit agreement, referring to the cost of production. This term is very unsatisfactory, and should, if possible, be struck out. As, however, some publishers will not enter into an agreement on this basis without demanding some deduction for office rent, expenses, etc., it may sometimes be found policy to yield on this point. In such a case the difficulty ought to be met by some fixed sum, say 5 per cent., on the cost of production of the book. This, though the best attainable clause, is still unsatisfactory, as it

contravenes the great basis of all agreements between the author and the publisher, namely, that their interests should be in common. Office expenses, of course, if they are considered by one of the three persons concerned with the sale of a book, namely, author, bookseller, and publisher, should be considered by all.

(iv). The fourth method is that of royalty. This is the simplest and most convenient form of agreement, the accounts are clear and easily understood, and to check them involves but little labour.

THE SYSTEMS OF DEFERRED ROYALTY,

(i). After cost of production has been covered.

(ii). After the sale of a certain number of copies, should be strenuously avoided.

The first of these methods is absolutely inadmissible as involving all the objections of the profit-sharing arrangement, and the second is only admissible if the royalty is proportionately increased after the sale of the stated number, and if the author is sure that the publishers stipulate to print a larger number than the number stated on which no royalty is paid.

Now that some stand has been made to sell books at a net figure, authors should be careful that their royalty is paid on the published price, and that the book is not going to be sold net: the equivalent of 15 per cent. on the published

price of an ordinary six shilling book is 18 per cent. on a net book of 5s.

Every author who cannot command the highest scale, should, however small the royalty offered him, stipulate for an increase with increased sales. The system of a royalty increasing with the sales is equitable to both parties, and the author thereby avoids being dependent on the "generosity" of the publisher if the sales are large. There are no doubt some royalties which cannot be increased, or in other words some authors, on account of their popularity, can demand the highest royalty from the beginning. An example of an increasing royalty would be, say, 10 per cent. of the published price on the sale of the first 500 copies, 15 per cent. up to 2,000, 20 per cent. after the sale of 2,000, etc.

This form of payment is very convenient for educational works. It may be doubtful whether an educational book will be taken up by the educational centres. Should the work however, meet with the approval of teachers it will sell in its thousands, and the returns will be great. A successful educational work, for instance, has a far greater circulation than any popular novel.

As agreements have been from time to time offered where the royalty decreases with the increased circulation, it is only necessary after the former statement to mention that such an arrangement is worse than absurd.

If the book is a prize in the book lottery, the

author with a rising royalty will reap a proportionate return, and no publisher who is desirous of dealing fairly with authors will object, when the book is selling in its thousands, to paying the author accordingly, but it must be under agreement. It is impossible to give more than a most cursory statement with regard to agreements for sale of bookrights, but those whom the subject really interests must be referred to the books on the subject, "The Methods of Publishing," "Addenda to the Methods of Publishing," the "Cost of Production," published by the Society of Authors. Examples with figures are given in another part of this work (p. 154, *et seq.*).

The next branch of literary property to be considered is SERIAL RIGHTS. As has been pointed out, owing to the large increase of the reading public, the result of education, the production of literary property has enormously increased.

The issues of periodicals, magazines, daily and weekly papers have kept pace, and publication in this periodical form has added considerably to an author's profits. As the circulation thus obtained does not interfere with the book circulation the author gains a wider public, and in consequence a larger commercial value for his work.

Serial rights may be divided as follows :–

These are the common forms :—

1. Rights in some important London magazine or paper.

2. Rights in some important American magazine or paper.

3. Secondary rights in England.

4. Secondary rights in America.

5. Rights in the Colonies and Dependencies of Great Britain.

In selling any of these rights the author should be very careful of what he is selling, and of the date of publication.

If the author is careless, he may find that he has sold all serial rights, that his story is being syndicated in the provinces and in America, and is bringing in moneys that he could have put into his own pocket, or that his work is being constantly reproduced in serial versions in the same paper.

Another result of this carelessness may be that he finds his work in serial form advertised at absurdly cheap prices, which may tend to depreciate the value of any fresh work from his pen.

He may find again, that he has brought himself within the toils of the Copyright Act. The eighteenth section referring to magazines, etc., runs as follows:—

("xviii). And be it enacted, that when any publisher or other person shall, before or at the time of the passing of this Act, have projected, conducted, and carried on, or shall hereafter, project, conduct and carry on, or be the proprietor of any encyclopædia, review, magazine, periodical work, or work published in a series of

books or parts, or any book whatsoever, and shall have employed, or shall employ, any persons to compose the same, or any volume, parts, essays, articles, or portions thereof for publication in or as part of the same, and such work, volumes, parts, essays, articles, or portions shall have been or shall hereafter be composed under such employment, on the terms that the copyright therein shall belong to such proprietor, projector, publisher, or conductor, and paid for by such proprietor, projector, publisher, or conductor, the copyright in every such encyclopædia, review, magazine, periodical work, and work published in a series of books or parts, and in every volume, part, essay, article and portion so composed and paid for, shall be the property of such proprietor, projector, publisher, or other conductor, who shall enjoy the same rights as if he were the actual author thereof, and shall have such term of copyright therein as is given to the authors of books by this Act; except only that in the case of essays, articles, or portions forming part of and first published in reviews, magazines, or other periodical works of a like nature, after the term of twenty-eight years from the first publication thereof respectively, the right of publishing the same in a separate form shall revert to the author for the remainder of the term given by this Act: Provided always, that during the term of twenty-eight years the said proprietor, publisher, or conductor shall not publish any such essay, article, or

portion separately or singly, without the consent, previously obtained, of the author thereof, or his assigns: Provided also that nothing herein contained shall alter or affect the right of any person who shall have been, or who shall be so employed as aforesaid, to publish any such his composition in a separate form, who by any contract, express or implied, may have reserved, or may hereafter reserve to himself such right; but every author reserving, retaining, or having such right shall be entitled to the copyright in such composition when published in a separate form, according to this Act, without prejudice to the right of such proprietor, projector, publisher or conductor, as aforesaid."

It will be seen from this that when the proprietor employs and pays (a most important feature) a writer on the terms that the copyright in the work done shall belong to such proprietor, then the proprietor can for twenty-eight years republish the work, but only with the consent of the author; but that the author may on the other hand expressly or impliedly retain his copyright. The question of what would happen if nothing was said about copyright is left open. Does the author impliedly reserve it?

One case decided in the courts seems to point to this view, but the question is still, by good authorities, considered doubtful.

The author should always endeavour to have a special contract, and should, under all circum-

stances, try to avoid coming under the ban of the 18th section.

If the author can sell both the American and English serial rights, he must arrange for simultaneous publication so as not to lose the American copyright.

There are certain periodicals that publish long stories in single numbers.

This is often the case with annuals.

The author, when selling to such periodicals, should keep this point before him, as it is possible that such circulation may damage the book rights, and if this is likely, he should secure an enhanced price.

The author should never sign a receipt for moneys in payment for serial use which is so expressed as to convey the copyright to the proprietor.

If an author does not understand what he is signing, he had better take the advice of someone who does.

He should be careful of the date of publication, for the very simple reason that the tale will be published in book form, and it cannot appear in this form until it has run at any rate for some months as a serial.

It it important for an author to arrange that the publication of one story does not conflict with the publication of another.

There is the further question that many periodicals do not pay until publication takes

place. This, of course, could not be delayed indefinitely, but the expense and difficulty of bringing the machinery of the law to work ought, if possible, to be avoided. Let the contract be quite clear by taking a little care in the beginning.

Authors should be careful also that their MS. is sent typewritten. If typewriting is too expensive, then the writing should be very distinct.

There is no doubt, however, that a typewritten MS. increases an author's chance of being read, and he should not neglect this chance.

The author should always retain a copy in case of accidents, and should be very careful of the position and repute of the periodical he intends to deal with. An author, when writing to an editor, should clearly state what he is offering for sale. Thus:

"Dear Sir, I beg to offer you the enclosed for serial publication in number of or any number that may be subsequently agreed upon."

The author should also mention the price that he is willing to take, that is if he is particular on this point.

If the tale is accepted without any further special stipulations, then it is accepted on the terms of the letter.

It is important, therefore, to keep copies of letters.

Before closing these remarks on the manage-

ment of literary property at the present day, under the present laws, some mention must be made of the literary agent.

In the last few years, as has been shown owing to the influence of education, the reading public has increased proportionately, and an enormous outcrop of magazines have been started to meet the reading demand.

In addition, as already pointed out, the Berne Convention and the American Copyright Act increased the value of the author's property, and confirmed him in possession of his own if to a limited extent only, at any rate, to an extent that he had never enjoyed before, in consequence he had a large estate to farm, and it needed to be farmed carefully.

An author is as a rule endowed with an artistic temperament; he knows little of farming an estate, and is wholly unbusinesslike in making commercial bargains. The outcome of this position was the literary agent. An author who makes his living by writing had to place serial rights in England—in London and the provinces—in America—arranging for simultaneous publication—in the Colonies. He had in addition to arrange for book publication in England and America, Colonial and Continental Bookrights and Translation rights. Each of these rights possessed a commercial and market value.

The literary agent, who knew the market prices, who was in touch with editors of papers

and publishers, saw his chance and stepped in to help the bewildered author, who either was not reaping the benefit of the sale of all his rights, or was, owing to ignorance, constantly underselling his real value.

The American Copyright Law added especially to the author's difficulties.

The worry and trouble of correspondence with regard to simultaneous publication was much more easily arranged by a middleman, so that the author, although he might pay perhaps 10 per cent. to the agent, increased his own income considerably beyond that figure, and at the same time was relieved from the danger of business tricks and wiles.

But it is only to the author with an established position that the agent is essential. He may circulate the MSS. of minor authors and take the business responsibility off their shoulders, but he also takes the 10 per cent.

To these he may be useful, but if so at a price.

In these cases the agent cannot do more than the author for himself.

But one word of warning must be given. *Under no circumstances should an author assign the power of placing these outside rights, serial rights in England, America, translation rights, dramatic rights and other secondary rights, to the publisher*, for this reason, that such work does not lie within the scope of the publisher's business; that his office is not to place literary work

in other hands, but to produce in book form for the author ; that these rights left with the publisher are not likely to receive anything like the same attention as if left with the agent ; that the publisher is the only party that gains by the control, and that the author loses.

It should be added that the publisher generally asks 30 to 50 per cent. as a reward for this agency work, whereas that of the agents is from 10 to 15. When this fact is made known it is no wonder that the publisher tries to secure everything, and cries out against the literary agent.

The last portion of this chapter will be devoted to showing what recent attempts have been made towards bettering the position of authors since 5 and 6 Vic. c. 45 was passed. A Royal Commission on Copyright sat in 1875, but its authority was revoked owing to the death of its chairman, and a Commission sat in 1876, composed of many eminent lawyers and others.

The Commissioners delivered their Report in 1878.

The Commission was appointed owing to the fact that a law had been passed in Canada, 1875, which, it was thought, conflicted with the Imperial Act of 1842.

The difficulties that seemed to arise under the Canadian Act were finally settled judicially in the case of Smiles *v.* Belford, which case decided that the Canadians had no power to pirate the

works of English authors who had not obtained copyright as required by the Canadian law.

There was another injustice that the Colonials at this period objected to, namely, that to obtain copyright in the British Dominions, a book must be published in England.

This difficulty was met in the International and Colonial Act of 1886, by which publication in any part of Her Majesty's Dominions secures for the author universal British Copyright.

There have been other minor acts dealing with the sale of books in the Colonies, in order to enable the inhabitants to get good literature cheap.

These acts bear but slightly on the commercial value of an author's work, and have not been touched upon.

The suggestions in the Report of the Commissioners were many and exhaustive, and the document is well worthy of perusal by those interested in the future of Copyright.

There are seven subjects dealt with :—

1. Books. 2. Musical compositions. 3. Dramatic pieces. 4. Lectures. 5. Engravings, and other works of the same kind. 6. Paintings, Drawing, and Photography. 7. Sculptures.

With regard to Books, the Commissioners went very carefully into the case of duration of the term of copyright, and, after putting forward all the arguments for and against, decided to report in favour of Life and 30 years, giving

Her Majesty, by Order in Council, power to vary the term to meet any international arrangement.

With regard to Clause 18 of the Act of 1845, which relates to Magazine copyright, they suggested that the term of 28 years should be altered to three years, and that this provision should be retrospective.

They recommended that publication in any part of the British Dominions should secure copyright* throughout the Dominions, and that a British author who publishes a work outside the British Dominions should not be prevented thereby from obtaining copyright within them by a subsequent publication therein.

That the benefit of the copyright laws should extend to all, British subjects and aliens also.

With regard to abridgments, that no abridgment of copyright works should be allowed during the term of copyright without the consent of the owner of the copyright.

One very important point was dealt with touching dramatic and musical compositions. After deciding that the terms of copyright should be the same as that of books, the Commissioners further proposed in order to avoid the union between the literary and performing rights that the printed publication of such works should give dramatic or performing rights, and that public performance should give literary copyright.

They considered that the right of dramatising

*N.B.—This recommendation has been carried out, see above.

a novel should be reserved to the author, and that copyright in lectures should exist for the life of the author and thirty years.

With regard to registration it was proposed to make it compulsory, and the British Museum authorities were considered the fittest persons to have charge of this duty.

Other recommendations followed as to penalties for future piracies and restrictive measures, and lastly a very exhaustive treatise dealt with Colonial and International legislation.

It has been thought necessary to set out the main points of the Commission in some detail as all the subsequent attempts at legislation have been based on it.

The last attempt was made in 1879, when the Duke of Rutland, one of the Commissioners (then Lord John Manners) brought in a measure on behalf of the Conservative Government. This bill, owing to the dissolution of Parliament in 1880, was not proceeded with. It was a bill framed to carry out the suggestions of the Commission from which it differed only in one or two points.

In 1882 and 1888 two bills, the Musical Composition Acts were introduced and became law.

In 1886, as stated previously, the Berne Convention was signed. This seemed to give a stimulus to copyright, as the same year the Society of Authors drafted a bill, which however was not brought before Parliament. After

the passing of the American Copyright Act in 1890, the society again showed their activity in the cause of copyright, and Lord Monkswell in 1891 brought forward a bill promoted by them for consolidating and amending the law.

This bill dealt with all classes of copyright property, literary and otherwise, and was very carefully considered by all parties interested. It followed in the main the report of the Commission, only differing from this report as far as literary property is concerned in minor points. This bill was read a second time in the House of Lords, subject to the singular condition imposed by Lord Halsbury, as representing the Government, that it should not be further proceeded with.

Copyright legislation remained stationary until the beginning of the year 1896, when the Society of Authors decided to appoint a sub-committee to reconsider in full the question of consolidating and amending the Copyright Acts.

The question of applying for a full consolidating and amending bill was very seriously discussed, and finally, for various reasons, set aside.

This course must be acknowledged as a thoroughly sound one, as a bill embodying the question of consolidating Acts of Parliament is never likely to be brought forward, except by the Government itself. It is practically useless for private individuals, however influential, or however influential the bodies they represent, to deal

with a question so large and so difficult as the consolidation of the Copyright Acts. It is no longer a question of obtaining uniformity for different kinds of literary and artistic property, and for the methods of dealing with them in Great Britain and Ireland.

There is the wide question further involved of the British Colonies, which question a little time back reached a very acute stage with regard to the reproduction of copyright books in Canada, and there is the still wider question of International Copyright under the Berne Convention. To have a full knowledge on these points, it is absolutely necessary to be behind the scenes, and to know the negotiations of the Colonial and Foreign Office that have been, or may be, pending. The society, therefore, wisely settled to bring forward a small amending bill which might deal with the points which were in most pressing need of amendment, but the society naturally only confined itself to literary and dramatic property, and, with that object in view, thought first of merely dealing with the eighteenth section of the existing Act of 1842, which has been, since the act was passed, so great a stumbling block. This section, quoted in full on page 293, refers to literary property contributed to magazines, periodicals and encyclopædias. It is extremely badly drawn, and almost impossible to interpret. Council was instructed on behalf of the society to deal with the matter.

Instructions had no sooner been delivered than a letter appeared in the *Times* from Mr. Tree with regard to the dramatic rights of novelists in their own works, *apropos* of the pirated versions of "Trilby" that were appearing in the country. The society at once joined forces with Mr. Tree and determined to widen the scope of their proceedings. A meeting of other bodies interested in literary copyright was called. Mr. Longman represented the Publishers' Association, Mr. Daldy the Copyright Association. A plan was submitted to those present for the drafting of a Bill amending the law on the following important points:—

1. The eighteenth Section (Magazine Copyright).
2. The Dramatisation of novels.
3. Copyright in lectures.
4. The term of copyright.
5. Abridgment of books.
6. The question of copyright in titles.

It was decided, after mature deliberation, to drop the following points:—

1. The term of copyright.
2. The questions of copyright in titles.

The former, it was thought, would be better left for the Consolidating Bill, and the latter was considered too difficult a question to handle at the present time and in the present bill. It was not, however, till July, 1897, that the bill was in a fit state to be placed before the House of Lords.

Considerable delay had occurred, as it appeared that the representatives of the Publishers' and Copyright Associations, although acting for these bodies, could not bind them, and had, from time to time, to refer to their principals. This method of procedure would naturally tend to complicate the position. If those engaged in the work had been more numerous, the negotiations might have been prolonged indefinitely, like a suit in Chancery. The main points of the bill had met with the assent of all parties. The sub-committee of the society then "took the bull by the horns," placed the bill in Lord Monkswell's hands, and left the details to be fought out in committee. In its final shape the bill dealt with the following points:—

1. Copyright in periodical works.
2. Articles in encyclopædias.
3. Lectures.
4. Abridgments.
5. A short clause touching newspapers, being merely declaratory of the present law.
6. Dramatisation.
7. Summary remedy for infringement of dramatic copyright.
8. Date of publication.

There was some objection raised to the bill, as then settled, by one or two persons of importance who had not been consulted in its initial stages. Their objections were mainly based on the method of drafting the bill, and on the fact that the bill

dealt in one or two points with newspapers. Neither of these objections, however, can now be considered to hold water, as the bill has been re-drafted on behalf of the House of Lords by Lord Thring, whose parliamentary draftsmanship will no doubt satisfy the objection, and the clauses referring to newspapers have been struck out, as, after mature consideration, it was felt that these ought to be dealt with in a Consolidating bill, but this is rather anticipating. The bill was read a first time in the House of Lords, and on July 1st a very strong committee of Peers, of whom Lord Monkswell acted as chairman, sat upon the Bill. The committee were as follows: Lord Monkswell (chairman), Lords Farrer, Hatherton, Hobhouse, Knutsford, Pirbright, Tennyson, Thring, and Welby.

Evidence was summoned before the committee touching the amendments proposed, and the Bill was finally re-drafted, and passed the third reading on July 23rd, 1897. In its final state it dealt with :—

1. Translations.
2. Magazine copyright.
3. Copyright in lectures.
4. Abridgments.
5. Dramatisation of novels.
6. Summary remedy for infringement of dramatic copyright, 1897.

In the autumn of 1897 it was proposed by the Secretary of the Copyright Association to gather

together all those bodies interested in copyright to draft a Consolidating bill, and the members of a joint committee were summoned to meet at Mr. Murray's offices. The bill which was submitted for their perusal was a bill which had been drafted five years ago by the Secretary of the association, and had been added to from time to time when any fresh points occurred.

Its draftsmanship was in many points doubtful, although it was rumoured that this most important question had received the consideration of two members of the Bar, Q.C's., whose names could not be mentioned. This much was, however, clear, the Bill contained clauses materially differing from those clauses already approved by the Copyright Association in the Society of Authors' Amending Bill, and others that were not in accord with the letter and spirit of the Copyright Commission. Apart from this, however, such an undertaking at that time was inopportune, as it conflicted with the passing of the Amending Bill, and was prejudicial to copyright interests, as amendment ought to precede consolidation. If, therefore, the bill of the society should be successfully passed, it would then be high time to consider the question of consolidation, if consolidation from private sources can possibly be of any material advantage. Under any circumstances, if the question of consolidation was going to be undertaken by private individuals, it would only be undertaken satisfactorily on one

basis ; that is, by drawing together all the different producers of copyright property, as distinct from the holders of copyright—the tradesmen of literary, artistic, and musical wares are not likely to propose a law for the benefit of producers. Their interests may be in some respects similar, but they must in many points be dissimilar,—that the views of such producers of copyright property should be taken either through the societies which represent the different branches, or through representative men from each branch ; that a certain sum should be subscribed by all concerned, and that the best parliamentary draftsmen securable should receive instructions to draft a Bill containing all the main points which had been agreed upon between the joint committee of producers ; that another counsel eminent for his knowledge of copyright law should also be instructed to join in consultation with the committee and counsel previously appointed ; that the bill thus drafted should be put before a joint committee of producers and holders, summoned for the purpose, and that at all meetings of such committee counsel should be present to keep the legal aspect of the bill constantly before the committee. This course is absolutely necessary, for the artistic temperament is not always capable of grasping legal niceties. It must certainly be considered that the producers of copyright property should form a large majority of this committee.

It does not seem at all desirable, even under the most favourable circumstances, that such a Copyright Bill should be put forward, nor does it seem that, if put forward, it would be accepted, although possibly it might be of benefit to any future Government that thought of taking the matter up seriously. Where such serious questions as the position of Great Britain and Ireland with its colonies, and with other countries in the universe, have to be discussed, it is not only fitting, but absolutely necessary, that the party representing public opinion at the time should take up a subject so vast and so important. It cannot possibly be of any avail that a few gentlemen, honourably known as publishers, or highly-gifted as authors, should solemnly sit down to discuss a Consolidating Bill without any recognised legal adviser or parliamentary draftsman, and without any previous and laboured inquiry into the Copyright laws. The bill in its final form was not, however, so unsatisfactory as in its initial stages might have been deduced.

It followed the suggestions of the Copyright Commissioners on some points.

It took most of the best ideas from the two bills of the Society of Authors brought forward in 1891 and 1897 by Lord Monkswell, and finally put forward again those clauses and definitions dealing with copyright in newspapers that had been struck out of the bill of 1897.

The bill of the Society of Authors, 1897,

brought forward by Lord Monkswell, and the Consolidating Bill, brought forward by Lord Herschell, were both before the House of Lords in the opening session of 1898, and were both referred to a select committee.

It is feared, however, that the introduction of the large measure has effectively stopped copyright legislation for the present, as the question of the consolidation of copyright is an Imperial question, as stated previously, and the Government are anxious to avoid it.

It is impossible to say, therefore, what the immediate future will bring about, but if ever the happy time should arrive when Imperial Federation will be placed on a permanent and stable basis, then Copyright Law Reform will meet with the attention that it merits.

At that time, no doubt, the Americans will also have come to consider themselves as on an equality with the citizens of other civilised powers, and will have done away with the trade considerations of their present bill.

Finally it is hoped that there will be one uniform International Copyright Law for all civilised states, and all those interested in this vast and increasing literary property should labour with this object in view.

Chapter VI.

Summary.

In the following Summary the information and warnings given above at length are recapitulated briefly for purposes of convenience and reference.

1. Preparatory.

(i). Write only on one side of the paper.

(ii). In order to know the length of your MS., use a uniform size of paper so as to have very nearly the same number of words on every page. Therefore the number of words on a page multiplied by the number of pages gives the length of the MS.

(iii). If you can afford it, get your MS. typewritten. This gives you a first proof, which you can revise and alter as much as you please without additional cost. If you cannot afford it, write legibly with spaces or new pages for the divisions and chapters.

2. With the Editor.

(i). In offering your MS., as an unknown

writer, your main object is to make an appearance: let your only stipulation be that your name is to appear. Always insist, *if you can*, upon the publication of your name. The only way to arrive at literary success is to get your name known in connection with your work.

(ii). Do not continue to send all your work to the same editor, even though he may offer to take it. Try to get known to as many editors as possible. Every magazine means a different set of readers.

(iii). When, if ever, you are so fortunate as to become acceptable to the public, you can begin to offer your MSS. with conditions as to time and terms.

(iv). Sell to the editor your first serial right in this country only. Reserve all other rights.

(v). If the cheque arrives with a receipt conveying the copyright to the proprietor of the magazine, strike out the clause before you sign it.

(vi). Avoid magazines of small circulation. Aim at appearing in those which are most widely circulated.

(vii). While you are not strong enough to insist on terms, yield, but take a note of terms that are forced upon you, and, when you are strong enough, try another magazine.

(viii). In your choice of a magazine, first study the class of articles which appear in it, and send your own papers only to the magazine which seems most likely to suit your subject.

(ix). If you are offering work to a serious paper, such as one of the quarterlies, or a high-class monthly, write to the editor first, offering to send it for approval.

(x). If you are offering a story, send it with a short scenario of the plot.

3. With the Publisher.

(i). Remember that a publisher is a man of business, who makes money by selling books. He is, therefore, moved by no enthusiasms for literature, but simply by the consideration of what will pay.

(ii). Meet him as one business man should meet another, with the wholesome suspicion, based on experience, that he will "best" you if he can.

(iii). Learn from the preceding pages what sized book your MS. would make, what it would cost to print, bind, and advertise: observe how the publisher deals with the bookseller: and what, therefore, will be the profit or the loss on the book by working out imaginary sales.

(iv). Read carefully the "Draft Agreements" issued by the Committee of the Publishers' Association, in order to find out the various ways by which your publisher will probably endeavour to "grab" the whole of the profits. This committee has artlessly disclosed almost all the tricks practised by the trade—not quite.

Let us, however, draw up a few of the rules to

be observed in an agreement. There are three methods of dealing with literary property :—

I. That of selling it outright.

This is in many respects the most satisfactory, *if a proper price can be obtained.* But the transaction should be managed by a competent agent.

II. A profit-sharing agreement.

In this case the following rules should be attended to :—

(i). Not to sign any agreement in which the cost of production forms a part.

(ii). Not to give the publisher the power of putting the profits into his own pocket by charging for advertisements in his own organs ; or by charging exchange advertisements.

(iii). Not to allow a special charge for "office expenses," unless the same allowance is made to the author.

(iv). Not to give up American, Colonial, or Continental rights.

(v). Not to give up dramatic, serial, or translation rights.

(vi). Not to bind yourself for future work to any publisher. *This is most important.* As well bind yourself for the future to any one solicitor or doctor.

(vii). To get the agreement stamped in case of any subsequent dispute.

III. The royalty system.

In this system, which has opened the door to a most amazing amount of overreaching, it is, above all things, necessary to know what the proposed royalty means to both sides. It is now possible for an author to ascertain approximately and very nearly the truth. From time to time the very important figures connected with royalties are published in *The Author*. Readers can also work out the figures for themselves (see p. 219). Let no one, not even the youngest writer, sign a royalty agreement without finding out what it gives the publisher as well as himself.

The four points which the Society has always demanded from the outset are :—

(i). That both sides shall know what an agreement means.

(ii). The inspection of those accounts which belong to the author. We are advised that this is a right, in the nature of a common law right, which cannot be denied or withheld.

(iii). That there shall be no secret profits.

(iv). That nothing shall be charged which has not been actually paid—for instance, that there shall be no charge for advertisements in the publisher's own organs, and none for exchanged advertisements ; and that all discounts shall be duly entered for the benefit of author as well as publisher.

If these points are carefully looked after, the

author may rest pretty well assured that he is in right hands. At the same time, he will do well to send his agreement to the Secretary of the Society of Authors before he signs it.

4. With the Printer.

(i). In a profit-sharing agreement you have a right to a voice in the arrangements with printer, paper-maker, and binder.

(ii). The chief point for you personally to observe with the printer is to furnish him with a clearly written or typewritten MS.

(iii). If typewritten you should make all corrections before the MS. goes to the printer.

(iv). You will probably find in your publisher's agreement a clause allowing corrections "up to 5/- or 10/-" or anything else, per sheet, care being taken not to explain the connection between money, and sheets, and corrections.

The meaning is this. Corrections are charged by the work of the compositor per hour. If there is a change in the line, or what is called "running over," there may be a very grave addition to the cost.

5. With the Typewriter.

It seems generally understood that typewriting should cost 1/- to 1/3 per thousand words, in duplicate.

6. Copyright.

(i). In a book.

Copyright at present lasts for forty-two years from first publication, or for the life of the author and seven years after.

(ii). In a magazine article.

Copyright in a magazine article is a difficult subject to deal with. Readers are referred to p. 305, where Mr. Thring treats of it at length.

7. International Copyright.

On this point, the important point to be remembered, is that the author must not, on any account, allow the publisher either to act as his agent in securing rights under this head, or to take any share in the profits arising from those rights.

Nor must he allow his publisher to share in rights of translation, Continental rights, or dramatic rights.

8. Registration of Titles.

There is no real copyright in titles. An author, however, can bring an action for damage done to his book by the sale of another with the same title. If he can prove damage, he will win his case.

9. The Literary Agent.

The rise and rapid development of the literary agent have been already considered. I do not advise a beginner to go to an agent in the attempt to place magazine articles. In the case of a

book it is different. An agent may lend important assistance, even to a beginner, in placing his book. But the greatest care must be observed in the employment of an agent. His is a kind of work which demands the utmost integrity: he must be wholly on the side of the author, his client. I have heard, for instance, rumours of an agent taking money from a publisher for bringing him work. Such a practice, if it were found out, would instantly blast the character of an agent.

APPENDIX.

SOCIETY OF AUTHORS, 1898.

PRESIDENT.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

COUNCIL.

Sir Edwin Arnold, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.
J. M. Barrie.
A. W. à Beckett.
Robert Bateman.
F. E. Beddard, F.R.S.
Sir Henry Bergne, K.C.M.G.
Sir Walter Besant.
Augustine Birrell, M.P.
Rev. Prof. Bonney, F.R.S.
Right Hon. James Bryce, M.P.
Right Hon. Lord Burghclere, P.C.
Hall Caine.
Egerton Castle, F.S.A.
P. W. Clayden.
Edward Clodd.
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THE

SOCIETY OF AUTHORS

(INCORPORATED).

PRESIDENT:

GEORGE MEREDITH.

When this Society was first established, its founders were actuated by two leading principles. First, that the relations between author and publisher require to be placed once for all upon a recognised basis of justice. Second, that questions of copyright—domestic and international—require to be kept steadily in the public mind, that authors may receive by legislation the rewards to which they are entitled.

I.

No one has ever denied that the relations of author to publisher are at the present moment in the most unsatisfactory condition possible. There are no fixed principles; there has never been any attempt to decide on what principles books should be published; there are twenty different methods of publication, not one of which has ever been advanced or defended on the grounds of justice and fairness to author and publisher alike. Not only are there no fixed principles, but the trade of publishing is infested and brought into disrepute by persons who prey upon the ignorance and inexperience of authors, plundering them in their agreements and cheating them in their returns.

The better regulation of the trade by the adoption of principles recognised as just and equitable would be a step in the highest degree serviceable to literature. It would give independence to authors who now, often in total ignorance of fair prices, have to take humbly what they can get, with no other allies than their own reputation and the competition of the trade; it would cause the weeding out of houses whose existence is a disgrace to the trade; it would stem the output of books which ought not to be published, and would not appear but for the vanity of their writers and the greed of the publishers who live by producing such works.

In order to show the absolute necessity for reform, the Society began from the outset to collect facts, and to show the exact position with regard to the production of books. After some years of patient investigation and accumulation the Society has been enabled to prove the following, among other points.

(1.) Owing to the growth of a system by which publishers' accounts alone, among all other business returns, have been received by authors without audit or examination, the door has been open to frauds of every description. In other words, the temptation to steal without the danger of detection has been held out before a large body of men. It has been proved up to the hilt by facts that in a great number of cases the temptation has proved to be too strong to be resisted.

(2.) The robbery of authors—in these cases—takes the following forms:—

a. The cost of composition, machining, paper and binding is set down in excess, sometimes double, of the actual sum paid.

b. The charge for corrections is set down at anything the publisher pleases.

c. Charges are made for "office," "sundries," "travellers," "readers," and all kinds of things not in the agreement.

d. Excessive charge for advertisement. Here many forms of trick are perpetrated. First, no details are rendered, so that anything may be set down. If details are demanded, the announcement of the book in the publisher's own lists and circulars, for which the publisher pays nothing, is charged; the advertising of the book in the publisher's magazine, for which the publisher pays nothing, is charged; the advertising of the book in other magazines by exchange, for which the publisher pays nothing, is charged. There are many other ways of misleading the author, but these are the commonest. In fact, there is nothing whatever to prevent, what is often done, the sweeping of the whole profits of a book into the publisher's own hands by charging for advertisements in his own magazines, which cost him nothing.

e. Fraudulent return of number of copies sold.

f. Fraudulent return of moneys received.

Where the publisher takes the cost on himself, and a royalty is offered to the author on all copies sold, it would seem that the author, not being liable for the expense, is secure from most of these forms of trickery —from all, in fact, save the last two. But as the royalty is often withheld until the cost of production and advertisement have been covered, the application of our remarks to the royalty system is apparent. Again, under the royalty system few authors know what the royalty offered yields to the publisher and what to the author, which is equivalent to saying that but few authors truly comprehend the bargains proposed to them.

It is not enough to state these things, most of which were known or suspected before. The Society has proved them by publishing a book which contains

an account of them, with the actual agreements submitted to authors, and their working, their meaning, and their results. In another book it has given illustrations, in different type, of what books of all kinds do actually cost to print and publish. With these two books in their hands, authors ought to be able to protect themselves. If the figures are troublesome they may apply to the Secretary of the Society for their explanation.

The Society, during the last few years, has been able to save a great number of authors from pillage. It has caused certain houses, who had grown shameless with their impunity, to become more careful; it has awakened a wholesome spirit of distrust in those who send MSS. to publishers; it has caused a wider recognition of the reality of literary property; and it is still preparing the way for a thorough reform of the whole conduct and management of literary property.

It is also no small matter that the Society has saved many who, having none of the qualities required to insure literary success, would have been dragged in, by lying assurances, to pay large sums of money for what they were informed were the costs of production. In other words, the Society has done much to restrict the publication of worthless books.

The publisher is not the only person whom the Society has to combat in maintaining the property of Authors.

The question of magazine rights and of the responsibilities of editors of weekly and monthly papers is constantly in dispute, especially as Section XVIII. of the Copyright Act referring to magazines is badly worded, difficult of interpretation, and involved. The legal advice to be obtained from the Society can be obtained nowhere else. No other persons have had such constant practice and experience in these matters as the secretary of the Society and its solicitors. Legal advice is, as a rule, expensive, but the Society includes this in the yearly subscription.

It is further necessary from time to time to obtain moneys for contributions or the return of MSS. withheld. This the secretary can very often do when the author cannot.

The prestige and weight of the Society's name is of considerable value on these occasions, and, should this prove insufficient, there is still the weight of the law as a last resource.

In bankruptcy cases the claim of the member is simply placed in the hands of the Society's solicitors, who take the necessary steps for proving the claim and recovering the dividend, if any, under the bankruptcy, without any charge to the member, who thus receives his full dividend without payment of any law expenses.

The Society has, further, created a branch of work in which young writers can, for a small fee of one guinea, obtain the examination of a MS. by a competent man or woman of letters, and an opinion—such an opinion as would be given by a "coach"—on the nature and literary value of a work. The Reading Department has now been used by hundreds of young writers, with the result that bad and immature work has been kept from publication, and the writers have been directed into better methods.

This kind of criticism is very responsible work. The Society's readers—as the work sent up is almost entirely fiction—are mostly novelists who have proved their competence to appreciate good work by the work they have themselves put forth. The Society is also in touch with critical readers on almost every subject.

The methods in which the Society has acted, as well as the abuses against which its action has been taken, are well illustrated by the specimen cases which have been appended to the yearly reports. It is a question for the consideration of the committee whether publicity should be given to the names of the

offenders. In many cases where the Society would have readily exposed the transaction, the victim has not been so willing.

The following is a list of the works put forth or preparing by the Society :

1. "The Cost of Production." (Fourth edition now preparing.) 2*s.* 6*d.* 1891.
2. "The Various Methods of Publishing, with a Notice of the Frauds practised in connection with them." (Third edition now preparing.) 3*s.* 1891.
3. "The History of *La Societé des Gens de Lettres.*" 1*s.* 1889.
4. "Literature and the Pension List." 3*s.* 6*d.* 1889.
5. "Copyright Law Reform." 1*s.* 6*d.* 1891.
6. "The Society of Authors." A record of its action from its foundation. By Walter Besant (Chairman of Committee, 1888-1892.) 1*s.*
7. "The Contract of Publication in Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Switzerland. By Ernst Lunge, J.U.D. 2*s.* 6*d.*
8. "The Growth and Development of the Literary Profession." (Preparing.)
9. "International Copyright." (Preparing.)
10. "Equitable Publishing." (Preparing.)

It will be seen that several of these books have attained to a wide circulation.

In May, 1890, the *Author* was issued, as the official journal of the Society, under the editorship of Sir Walter Besant, the then Chairman of the Committee. It is the only paper in the United Kingdom having for its main object the definition and defence of the author's rights ; in its pages there is published every month information upon all kinds of questions as they arise, concerning literary property and its maintenance.

While in no way relaxing their efforts toward the bringing about of a better state of things, the committee are anxious to do what they can for individual authors under existing conditions. With this view the secretary (who is himself a solicitor) confidentially, and with the assistance of the Society's solicitors if he should think necessary, advises as to the safeguarding of literary property, examines agreements, examines and advises upon accounts rendered, and advises authors who wish to bring out works at their own expense. By seeking such advice, a writer will at least guard himself against falling into bad hands.

To sum up, the Society maintains :

1. That literary property, already vast, is rapidly growing, and forms a considerable portion of the national wealth.

2. That it has been hitherto practically undefended, and that it needs to be protected.

3. That the present modes of dealing with this great body of property are based on no principles of right and justice, and leave the door open to every kind of fraud.

4. That it is highly desirable to awaken a general recognition of literary property, to create a spirit of jealousy over its management, and to introduce the same watchfulness into literary transactions as obtains in all other business affairs.

With this view the Society recommends :

1. That the accounts of publishers should be submitted, like all other accounts between men who have shares in any enterprise, to audit.

2. That authors—even experienced authors—should take counsel with those whose business it is to study the subject, on the best method of publishing, and as to the risks to be encountered.

3. That, consequently, all agreements should be examined for authors by an experienced hand.

4. That no author should allow publication to be proceeded with until the agreement is signed.

Musical Publications and Copyrights.

In 1894 certain of the leading English musical composers decided to ask the Society whether it would use its organisation on behalf of musical authorship and property, to the same extent as it did on behalf of literary authorship and property.

The matter was duly brought before the committee. On looking through the articles of incorporation, it was at once seen that they had been drawn up with a view to assist all authors in the widest sense of authorship, and the committee accordingly willingly undertook to do their best to strengthen the rights of musical composers to their own property, and to give them the aid and experience of the Society in legal and other matters.

Sir A. C. Mackenzie was elected a member of the Council and committee, so as to be ready should any musical question be brought forward, to give the committee his valuable assistance.

The committee trust that their efforts in this direction may have as beneficial a result on behalf of musical composers, as their work during the past has had for the owners of literary property.

II.

The Question of Copyright.

Under this heading may be mentioned the action of the committee from time to time in procuring counsel's opinion in disputed and doubtful cases, or in taking cases into court, or noting and publishing cases. The following are some of the cases and opinions :—

1. Macdonald v. The National Review.
2. Rideal v. Kegan Paul.
3. Secret Profits.
4. Russian Copyright and Translation of Russian Books.

5. Canadian copyright.
6. The rights of critics and criticism.
7. Assignment of right to publish.

With regard to the matter of American Copyright, the question is now settled for a time. In March, 1891, an American Copyright Bill was passed, to take effect from July, 1891, giving to foreign authors a copyright in their works under certain conditions. Some of these conditions may still be the subject of amendment, but the desired reform, which in all our previous circulars we have urged upon the notice of the American public, has now substantially taken place.

But there is no similar progress to report with regard to domestic legislation. The Society of Authors six years ago drafted a Bill for the amendment and consolidation of the law of Copyright in this country. The Bill was laid before the Board of Trade by Mr. Underdown, Q.C., Hon. Council to the Society, and had the general approval of all interested in Copyright Reform. During 1890, a sub-committee met regularly for the discussion of the Bill, under the chairmanship of Sir Frederick Pollock, and finally Lord Monkswell took charge of the Bill in the House of Lords, where it was read for the first time in November 1890, and for the second in May, 1891. It was then shelved for the rest of the session. It is unnecessary to say more of the details of the Bill here, as one of the publications of the Society contains the memorandum in full,* but it will not be amiss to point out a few instances of defects in the existing law, which were provided for in Lord Monkswell's Bill, and call loudly for amendment.

1. The terms of Copyright for different classes of work are now all different. In Lord Monkswell's Bill they are uniform.

* "Copyright Law Reform," by J. M. Lely. 1*s.* 6*d.*

2. At the present time, an article in a magazine is locked up for twenty-eight years. In Lord Monkswell's Bill it is proposed to give the author leave to reprint in three years.

3. The right to make an abridgment is for the first time recognised by Lord Monkswell's Bill as part of the copyright. At the present time, the amount of mutilation possible under an unlimited assignment of the copyright is unlimited.

4. Authors have in England at the present time almost no dramatic rights. Lord Monkswell's Bill secures these rights to the author of the books.

5. Lastly, the existing law consists of no less than eighteen Acts of Parliament, besides common law principles, which are to be found only by searching the law reports. Owing to the manner in which the Acts have been drawn, the law is in many cases hardly intelligible, and is full of arbitrary distinctions for which it is impossible to find a reason. Lord Monkswell's Bill consolidates all this material.

The Society will continue to urge upon Imperial Parliament the necessity for remedial legislation, and begs to point out that it is the duty of all men of letters of all denominations to do all in their power to secure the passage of measures so directed towards their benefit.

The Council call attention to the fact that *this Society is the only institution which exists in this country for the protection of literature.* It is, therefore, one which demands the support of every author in the three kingdoms and the colonies. The protection and help it has afforded to authors is every year growing more and more. The influence it has already produced upon the character of agreements submitted to authors is already very marked, and is growing every year more and more. This influence is now felt not by members of the Society only, but by all who write. We work for everybody, whether they

belong to us or not. It is, however, not right that of those who are benefited by our action some should stand aloof and refuse to come in, and leave to the rest the burden of support. We have, already, 1500 members, among whom are most of our leading men and women of letters. But we ought to have five times that number: we want everybody who writes a book, and so makes himself a member of the great Guild of Literature, to feel that it is his duty to support the only Society which has ever existed for the maintenance of his rights.

Again, the Council feel it necessary to state emphatically that substantial progress in their objects will follow in direct proportion, not only as the muster-roll of members includes more and more all living authors, but also as the Association comes to be considered the one body which can give advice and assistance to aspirants to the profession of letters. When the Society of Authors can fairly boast that it speaks and acts in the name of the entire body of English men of letters, the mere material interests of the profession will be protected and advanced in a manner hitherto unknown and unattempted.

Owing to the kindness of its legal advisers, the Society is enabled to afford its members skilled assistance and advice which, under ordinary circumstances, they would be quite unable to procure elsewhere without incurring great expense; it should be mentioned at the same time that the Secretary is also a solicitor; and the Society proposes, with the advice of its Solicitors, to take up and fight, if necessary at its own expense, cases which are of a special and typical kind. This has already been done on more than one occasion with success. (*Vide* Appendix to Report for 1891).

Finally, the Society, through its Secretary, is in constant communication with other bodies in all parts of the world whose interest it is to maintain the rights

of Authors in America, in Germany, in France, &c., and is constantly striving to obtain due recognition of the rights of authorship in all civilised countries.

A great step in the right direction was made under the Berne Convention, and it is to be hoped that the supreme right of an Author to control the product of his own brain will be world-wide.

The foregoing are the immediate objects of the Society; other and larger schemes remain for future development.

G. Herbert Thring,
Secretary.

By Order.

THE WORK OF THE SOCIETY.

1. The maintenance, definition, and defence of literary and musical property.
2. The consolidation and amendment of the Laws of Domestic Copyright.
3. The promotion of International Copyright.

The first of these objects requires explanation. In order to defend literary and musical property, the Society acts as follows:

a. It aims at defining and establishing the principles which should rule the methods of publishing.

b. It examines agreements submitted to authors, and points out to them the clauses which are injurious to their interests, and what is of more importance to the author, and more difficult for the author to ascertain, what clauses should be inserted that are omitted. It seems hardly necessary to remark, were it not that the fact is so often forgotten, that such technical legal advice and labour on, and incident to, the settling of an agreement could only be acquired at the expense

of from £2 to £3 from the ordinary solicitor, and that even then the great majority of the profession have very little knowledge of the special kind requisite for this work. The guinea subscription to the Society seems to be then, on this item alone, a moderate charge for the work done; but this is not all the subscription covers.

c. It advises authors as to the best publishers for their purpose, and keeps them out of the hands of unscrupulous traders. Such information as the Society possesses and is willing to impart to its members has been acquired at considerable cost, and with great trouble.

d. It publishes from time to time, books, papers, etc., on the subjects which fall within its province, and has published sundry books explanatory of and bearing on the questions and interests at stake. It has recently published a most interesting book on publishing contracts in certain foreign countries, kindly written for the Society by Herr Lunge, of Zurich. It intends to produce other works as may from time to time be required.

e. It looks through accounts to see if they are on the face of them correct, and advises, after careful perusal, what course should be taken. If necessary, with the sanction of and at the member's expense, it appoints a reliable accountant to vouch the accounts on the member's behalf. This is no ordinary accountant's work, but requires particular technical skill which can only be applied through the offices of the Society. But the Society does more than this, for in particular cases which involve some definite principles, with the approval of the committee, it

undertakes to take the case entirely into its own hands, pay the accountant's charges, and all other costs that may be incidental thereto.

f. It examines estimates of the cost of production, so that in the case of an author paying for the printing, etc., he should not be overcharged. This is of course most advantageous to writers of educational, medical, technical, etc., books. These writers are sometimes young men anxious to come before the public and propound some new theory. It is of vital importance that they should lose as little by the cost of production as possible, and the payment of one guinea per annum seems but a small fee for the knowledge that the Society has so laboriously acquired, and which the Society alone can transmit.

g. It takes action on behalf of its members for the recovery of MSS. sent to publishers and editors, and not returned, and for the payment of moneys due for literary work done; and with the sanction of the Committee or Chairman, carries the matter if necessary right through the court to judgment, where, even if successful, it has to expend more money than would be covered by many years' subscriptions. In cases of bankruptcy, the claims of all of its members concerned are placed in the hands of its solicitors, and what is possible is done to secure payment. All the legal work of formal proof of debt, &c., is carried through without any charge to members.

h. It upholds, by legal action if necessary, the important principles on which literary and musical property is based.

i. The Secretary of the Society is himself a solicitor, and is competent therefore to pass a legal opinion. In cases of doubt or grave import, he can call in the Society's consulting solicitors to back his opinion Further, if the question is from one cause or another exceedingly difficult, or if the matter at issue is one that needs the weight of a great legal name to enforce it, with the sanction of the Committee and at the Society's expense, the opinion of some eminent counsel is obtained and published for the benefit of members. This latter course is one that necessitates considerable outlay.

j. In every other way possible the Society protects, warns, and informs its members as to the pecuniary interest of their works.

k. The Society issues a monthly paper devoted to the maintenance of literary property. The *Author* publishes every month the facts and figures relating to cost of production, the sale of books, and everything connected with publishing. It is the only paper which deals with these subjects. The so-called literary papers, if they touch on them at all, do so solely from the publisher's point of view. The *Author* is issued free to all members of the Society, but members are invited to pay for it, if they can do so, at an annual subscription of 6s. 6d. The present circulation of the *Author*, of which a considerable number are sold, is 2,000 every month.

All these things the Society does for the fee of £1 1s. per annum.

The Committee have put forward these main heads of its work, but think it necessary to mention that in addition there are numerous minor points touching

literary property that constantly come to, and are settled by, the Secretary.

The Committee regret the need of mentioning the pecuniary value of the work done by the Society for its members, but reasons for this course have arisen, owing to the fact of certain complaints being made by those who, joining the Society, have expected it to do what it never undertook to perform.

It should be borne in mind that, although a member may not have had occasion to seek the assistance of the Society in drawing an agreement or in auditing an account he may have benefited very greatly by the action of the Society in other cases. For example, many practices of overcharge for production, of charging for advertisements not paid for, of offering ridiculous royalties, have been rendered difficult and dangerous; this is entirely due to the action of the Society. It cannot be put too strongly that every case taken up by the Committee and pushed through to the end helps every single man or woman engaged in the literary profession. For this reason alone everyone so engaged ought to join the Society, and ought to support it to the best of his ability.

CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP.

The subscription is one guinea annually, payable on the 1st of January of each year. The sum of ten guineas for life membership entitles the subscriber to full membership of the Society.

Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "The Union Bank of London, Limited, Chancery Lane Branch;" or, "The London Joint Stock Bank, Limited, Westminster Branch."

Names of those who wish to be proposed as members may be sent at any time to the Secretary at the Secretary's offices. Subscriptions paid by members elected after 1st of October will cover the next year.

The Secretary can be personally consulted between the hours of Two p.m. and Five p.m., except on Saturdays. It is preferable that an appointment should be made by letter.

All communications made by the Secretary to those seeking his advice are absolutely confidential, and on this understanding alone advice is given.

ASSOCIATES.

Persons who have not published a book can only join the Society as Associates. The subscription and the advantages to be obtained, are the same as those of membership, the difference being that an Associate has no power to vote at the General Meeting. On notifying the Secretary of the publication of a book, their names will be transferred to full membership.

REGULATIONS CONCERNING MANUSCRIPTS.

1. The Society has a staff of readers who are competent to give a critical report upon MSS. submitted to them.
2. The fee for this service will for the future be one guinea, unless any special reason be present for making it higher or lower. The amount must then be left to the Secretary's discretion.
3. For this sum a report will be given upon MSS. of the usual three volume length, or upon collections of stories making in the aggregate a work of that length.
4. *In every case the fee and stamps for return postage must accompany the MSS.*
5. *The fee will be given entirely to the reader.*
6. The readers will not attempt to give an opinion upon the technical character of a

work. In some cases, however, the Society will, when required, obtain a technical opinion.

7. It is requested that a label may be sent with the MSS., having upon it the author's name, the *nom-de-plume* (if any) under which the work is written, and the address to which the MSS. is to be returned. This communication will be held as confidential.
8. The Society, while it takes every possible care of MSS. entrusted to it, is not liable for damage by fire or otherwise.

WARNINGS.

Authors are most earnestly warned—

1. Not to sign any agreement of which the alleged cost of production forms an integral part, unless an opportunity of proving the correctness of the figures is given them.
2. Not to enter into any correspondence with publishers who are not recommended by experienced friends, or by this Society.
3. Never, *on any account whatever*, to bind themselves down to any one firm of publishers.
4. Not to accept any proposal of royalty without consultation with the Society.
5. Not to accept any offer of money for MSS., without previously taking advice of the Society.
6. Not to accept any pecuniary risk or responsibility without advice.
7. Not, under ordinary circumstances, when a MS. has been refused by the well-known houses, to pay small houses for the production of the work.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE SOCIETY.

1. THE ANNUAL REPORT. That for January, 1898, can be had on application to the Secretary.
2. THE AUTHOR. A Monthly Journal devoted especially to the protection and maintenance of Literary Property. Issued to all Members. Annual Subscription, 6*s.* 6*d.*
3. LITERATURE AND THE PENSION LIST. By W. MORRIS COLLES, Barrister-at-Law. 3*s.*
4. THE HISTORY OF THE SOCIÉTÉ DES GENS DE LETTRES. By S. SQUIRE SPRIGGE, late Secretary to the Society. 1*s.*
5. THE COST OF PRODUCTION. In this work specimens are given of the most important forms of type, size of page, etc., with estimates showing what it costs to produce the more common kinds of books. 2*s.* 6*d.*
6. THE VARIOUS METHODS OF PUBLICATION. By S. SQUIRE SPRIGGE. In this work, compiled from the papers in the Society's offices, the various forms of agreements proposed by Publishers to Authors are examined, and their meaning carefully explained, with an account of the various kinds of fraud which have been made possible by the different clauses in their agreements. 3*s.*
7. COPYRIGHT LAW REFORM. An Exposition of Lord Monkswell's Copyright Bill of 1890. With Extracts from the Report of the Commission of 1878, and an Appendix containing the Berne Convention and the American Copyright Bill. By J. M. LELY, Barrister-at-Law. 1*s.* 6*d.*
8. THE SOCIETY OF AUTHORS. A Record of its Action from the Foundation. By WALTER BESANT (Chairman of Committee, 1888-1892). 1*s.*
9. THE CONTRACT OF PUBLICATION in Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Switzerland. By ERNST LUNGE, J.U.D. 2*s.* 6*d.*
10. THE ADDENDA TO THE "METHODS OF PUBLISHING." By G. HERBERT THRING. Being Additional Facts collected at the office of the Society since the publication of the "Methods," with Comments and Advice. 2*s.*

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